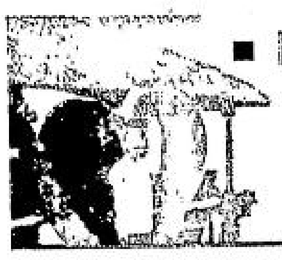

- **BUSINESS / B2-1**

Love is in the air, and prices are soaring

- **LIFESTYLE / D1**

How do I love thee? Let Pinoy writers count the ways

Do you have a story to tell about Edsa I? The INQUIRER is looking for those untold stories (photos, too) that contributed, no matter how small, to the first People Power in 1986 that so stunned the world and inspired and emboldened people in chains everywhere to break free. The contributions that will be selected by the editors will be used for the INQUIRER's special celebration of the 20th anniversary of Edsa I. **Send your contribution, with your address and contact number, not later than Feb. 15 to fdelmundo@inquirer.com.ph**

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, February 13, 2006 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 67 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Vague gov't plan for Edsa I celebration irks Ramos

By Nikko Dizon

WITH LESS THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE 20th anniversary of Edsa People Power I, former President Fidel Ramos said yesterday he had yet to see tangible preparations for a special celebration and called this "deplorable."

Ramos said President Macapagal-Arroyo's political squabble with ex-President Corazon Aquino was not an excuse to ignore the Feb.

VAGUE/ A20

Heart-racing letters of US presidents to valentines

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENTS AND THEIR wives have been an amorous lot, their White House years coming at the pinnacle of lives entwined. The men pursued and loved these women as intensely as they clawed their way to power and unleashed armies.

"Touch you I must or I'll burst," Ronald Reagan wrote to Nancy three years before he became California governor.

HEART-RACING/ A19

Palace tells gas firms to explain price hikes

Record profits of oil companies worldwide noted

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NO ENTRY
EXIT-ONLY
Ecce Agnus Dei

NINE days after the deadly stampede at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City, Bishop Julio Labayen blesses the site of the tragedy and celebrates Mass for the victims. ***(See story on Page A3.)***

RAFFY LERMA

By Christine O. Avendaño and Jamie Alarcon

MALACAÑANG WANTS oil firms in the country to justify their new round of price increases in the wake of record profits that global oil companies are reaping.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has directed the Department of Energy to ask oil firms to give a "written explanation" on why they had raised prices, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"We must ensure that there is a clear justification for such increases in accord with the situation in the world market," Bunye said.

The increases came despite the strengthening of the peso against the dollar.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Caltex Philippines Inc. and Petron Corp. led other oil firms in jacking up the prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos per liter over the weekend.

The oil firms cited high international prices and competitive market forces as reasons for the adjustments.

Since January, oil firms have raised the prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene three times by a total of P1.50 a liter. The price of LPG has also risen three times by P1.61 per kilogram or P17.71 per 11-kg cylinder.

The adjustments were apart from those brought about by the increase in the value-added tax from 10 percent to 12 percent on Feb. 1.

The price of unleaded gasoline went up by 70 centavos per liter and that of diesel by 60 centavos

PALACE/ A20

RP may be drawn into debate over cartoons

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

FILIPINO MUSLIMS HAVE JOINED the uproar of the Islamic world in its violent protest against the publication by a Danish newspaper in September last year of 12 cartoons which Muslims angrily claimed insulted the prophet Mohammed. They burned a replica of the Danish flag outside a mosque in Quiapo, demanded an apology from the Danish prime minister and threatened to torch the Danish Embassy.

The outburst of Islamic rage in Manila was not an isolated incident. It was a segment of the worldwide chain reaction to the cartoons that have widened the chasm between the Islamic world and Western democracies since the bombing of New York by Islamic extremists on Sept. 11, 2001.

Denmark's Prime Minister Andres Fogh Rasmusssen refused to buckle down to demands of Islamic countries to apologize, saying the publication touched on the issue of freedom of expression that is central to democracy. But he warned: "We are today facing global crisis that has the potential to escalate beyond the control of governments."

One of the 12 cartoons depicts Mohammed with a bomb in his turban, another shows him holding a sword with two women in Islamic dress, and another depicts him as standing in paradise telling a parade of suicide bombers, "Stop, stop. We have run out of virgins."

Muslims considered the satirical cartoons blasphemous. The offending cartoons have sparked a global firestorm that has now gone beyond diplomatic protests and have sparked a violent chain reaction. To describe the new conflict as a confirmation of Samuel P. Huntington's thesis of "a clash of civilizations" glosses over the clash of values between the Islamic world and the Western democracies not only over freedom of expression, but also over religious tolerance.

Athough none of the Philippine

RP MAY/ A20

Fil-Ams show basic way of helping poor

By Volt Contreras

AFTER THE SHOCK, GRIEF AND finger-pointing over the deadly "Wowowee" stampede, perhaps it is time to go back to the basics when extending a helping hand to the poor, officials of a Filipino-American aid group said.

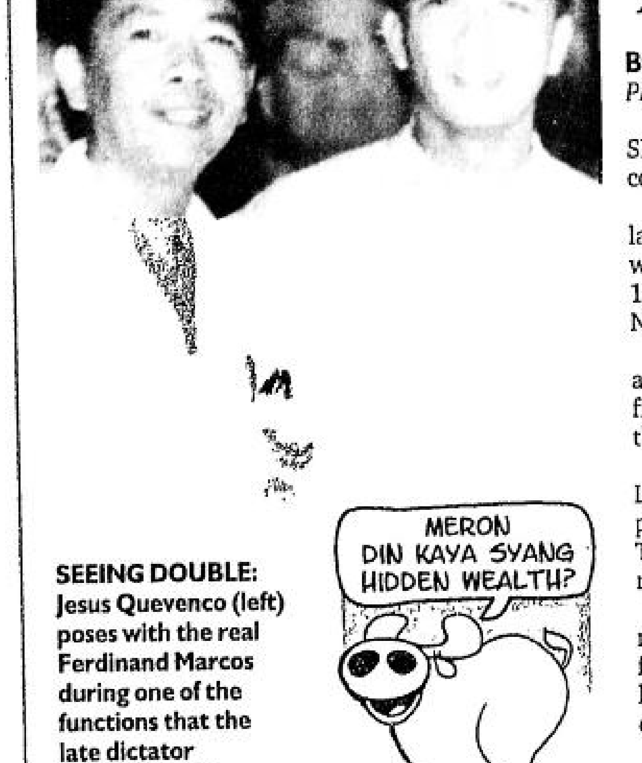
The officials of the Washington-based Feed the Hungry Inc. (FTH) had just arrived in the country when the Feb. 4 tragedy struck at the PhilSports Arena, formerly Ultra, in Pasig City.

Without fanfare or publicity, the FTH has provided about P57 million worth of assistance to the poor in 77 provinces since its formation in 1993. Aid comes in the form of livelihood equipment, scholarships, low-cost housing, classrooms, books and even farm animals.

The FTH is composed of 22 Filipino-Americans based in Washington D.C. and nearby Maryland and Virginia. They take off from work to be in the Philippines, usually from December to April, with a lineup of projects using funds raised in the United States.

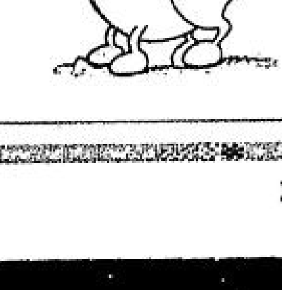
"'It's really with a heavy heart that we received news of the stampede," said FTH cochair Glo-

FIL-AMS/ A19



SEEING DOUBLE: Jesus Quevenco (left) poses with the real Ferdinand Marcos during one of the functions that the late dictator attended in this photo taken in 1965.

AP FILE PHOTO


MERON DIN KAYA SYANG HIDDEN WEALTH?

'Brod' recalls best, worst of Marcos years

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

SILAY CITY—"FERDINAND MARcos" is still alive.

No, we're not referring to the late dictator but his look-alike who doubled for Marcos in the 1964 presidential campaign in Negros Occidental.

Meet Jesus Quevenco, now 83, a retired manager of an insurance firm who is an active lay leader of the San Diego parish here.

Although he is not serving the Lord as penance for the Marcos presidency, Jesus and his wife Thelma, 77, are happy to tell stories of his brief moment of fame.

Jesus said that while he was not a politician, he was a good friend of then Silay Mayor Romulo Golez, a member of the Nacionalista Party (NP).

Golez brought Jesus to the NP convention at the Manila Hotel in

BROD/ A20

Love poems on radio heat up Baguio

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE EARLY BIRDS GET THE verses every chilly morning of February in this summer capital.

Rick, a 28-year-old cabbie, stops plying his taxi at 7:15 a.m. every day and parks so he can jot down the latest poem read aloud over BIG FM radio.

At about the same time, another resident, John Estepa, tunes in so his 5-year-old son Tofi, who is ill, could listen to the calming verses of Ibaloi Gabriel Baban Keith, who usually expresses lines in a sing-song cadence for what is arguably the only poetry broadcast in the country.

Keith, 37, a city information officer, has been reading the best of romantic poetry that he can get his hands on since March last year. And his selections have been a hit.

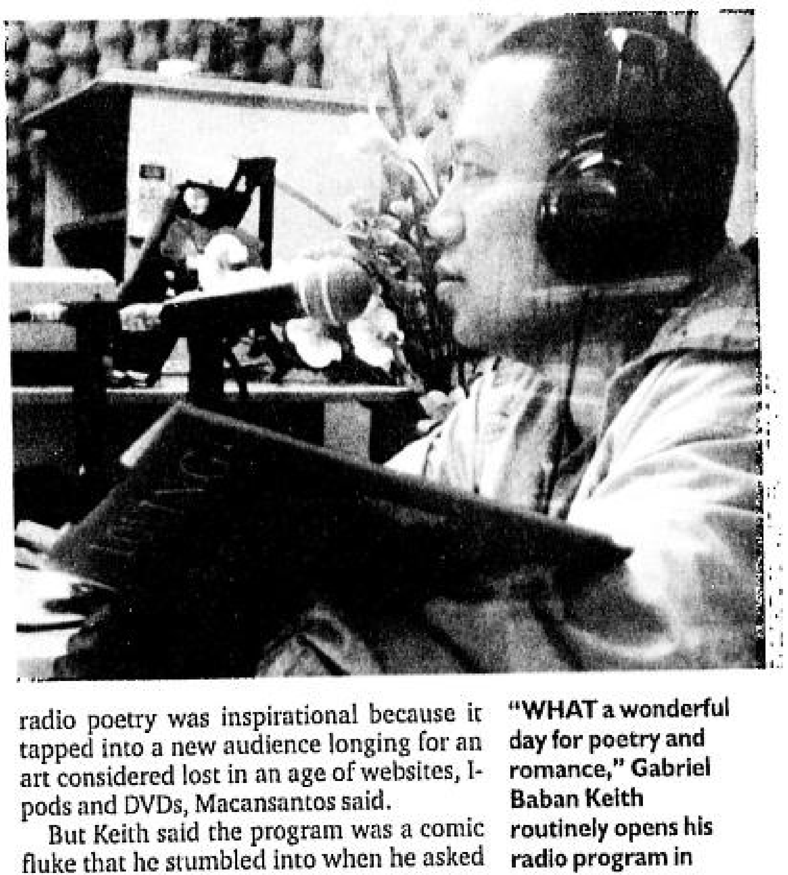
Poet Francis Macansantos, a Baguio-based Palanca awardee, said he was amused when his blind masseur advised him one day to introduce himself to Keith so he could "also become famous."

Macansantos and other Filipino bards joined Keith on Saturday to launch a series of poetic readings over radio that would run through the month of hearts.

Keith's success in generating interest in radio poetry was inspirational because it tapped into a new audience longing for an art considered lost in an age of websites, I-pods and DVDs, Macansantos said.

But Keith said the program was a comic fluke that he stumbled into when he asked BIG FM for airtime to read some of his po-

LOVE/ A19



"WHAT a wonderful day for poetry and romance," Gabriel Baban Keith routinely opens his radio program in Baguio City.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. Rains will be widespread over Bicol and Northern and Eastern Visayas. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/02/13/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FrontPage

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JDV: Interfaith body to stop clashes

By Michael Lim Ubac

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA yesterday pushed for the creation of an interfaith council within the United Nations system to prevent "religious and cultural" clashes.

He was referring to the controversial cartoons published in Europe which depicted the Prophet Mohammed variously as a terrorist. This spurred protests among Muslims worldwide who consider any depiction of the Prophet as blasphemous.

De Venecia said an interfaith council under the Security Council could institutionalize interfaith dialogues. It could also draw up and enforce rules of intercultural behavior in an increasingly interdependent world.

In November 2004, the Philippines sponsored a resolution calling for "interfaith dialogues" to isolate the extremists who advocate terrorism in the name of religion, and to prevent a potential "clash of civilizations."

The resolution, principally authored by De Venecia and co-sponsored by Iran and 23 other states, was approved by the UN General Assembly the same year.

"Already the western political right to free expression has clashed with the Muslim code of respect for its holiest figure," said De Venecia.

He explained that the proposed interfaith council could coordinate, monitor, expand and follow through on recommendations and decisions of interfaith dialogues at global, regional and national levels in various areas of the world.

De Venecia feared the violent protests throughout the Muslim world against the controversial cartoons "have now signaled the beginning of the clash of religions and civilizations which historians foresee."

He warned that conflicts like those raised by the European cartoons were bound to recur with "increasing intensity in our hybrid societies—unless we are able to inculcate new rules of civic behavior respectful of other cultures and other religions."

EO 464 still in effect, says Malacañang

By Christine O. Avendaño and TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG HAS NOT TOtally retreated from enforcing Executive Order 464, serving notice that it will not think twice about invoking the prohibition again if it deemed it necessary.

Palace officials made this clear yesterday and took pains to scotch the notion that the executive branch was the first to blink in the row with Congress after President Macapagal-Arroyo allowed Cabinet members and other government officials to appear starting today at Senate hearings on the proposed 2006 national budget.

"Executive Order 464 ... will remain in effect, especially for legislative inquiries which are deemed unproductive and clearly motivated by self-serving politics," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

The order, issued in late September, bars administration, police and military officials from appearing at congressional hearings without the President's approval.

Nothing to do with SC

Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio said that the Palace move to allow Cabinet officials to attend Senate hearings had nothing to do with the Senate asking the Supreme Court again last Friday to stop the implementation of the order, pointing out that Malacañang's seeming retreat had come earlier.

The Palace clarification was issued after executive officials and senators held dialogues in attempts to head off escalation of the feud.

By relenting on its earlier directive, Claudio said, the Palace merely wanted to "ease the tension and make the first move to restore cordiality in the executive's relationship with the Senate."

Defense against harassment

"We're standing by EO 464 and continue to reserve the right to defend the executive department from undue and destructive political grandstanding, persecution and harassment from a co-equal branch of government," Claudio said in a phone interview.

And in a text message later, Claudio said EO 464 was "valid and constitutional" and that the government had a strong case before the high court, which is to hear oral arguments on the case this week.

"We would rather await the Supreme Court's decision which we hope will be in the interest of clarifying executive-legislative relations," he said.

Sign of reconciliation

For his part, the President's chief of staff Michael Defensor told senators that the Palace acted "in good faith" and that releasing Cabinet members from the ban was "not a sign of weakness" on its part "but a sign of reconciliation in the light of the strong economy and the strong peso."

"As we have shown good faith, we hope they also do the same," he said in a separate phone interview, adding that the intention of the executive "is not to blink but to fix the weakest link."

Defensor said the dialogues were made possible with the help of allies and friends of the administration and that results were "very positive."

"Some senators are aghast at the way some of the budget hearings are being conducted," Defensor said. "Some responsible senators can see when their colleagues are already beyond the line."

Revocation demanded

Senators expressed relief at Ms Arroyo's move, but demanded that she take it a step further by revoking EO 464.

"President Arroyo must have realized that Executive Order 464 has absolutely no legal, political and constitutional basis at all," Senate President Franklin Drilon said as he welcomed the move.

"I am glad that the President's better judgment prevailed over the hotheads around her," Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II said.

Administration Sen. Joker Arroyo, for his part, credited newly appointed presidential legal counsel, former Rep. Eduardo Nachura, for Malacañang's change of heart.

"Malacañang must listen more to Nachura who knows the nuances of government, having been a congressman for nine years, rather than vested interest hangers-on in the Palace," he said in an interview.

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SATISFACTION GUARANTEE

BAYANTEL

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Don't blame Willie, ma tells public

By Russell Arador
PDI Central Luzon Desk

TARLAC CITY—THE MOTHER OF "WOWOwee" host Willie Revillame has surfaced and appealed to people to stop blaming him for the Feb. 4 stampede that killed 71 people at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City.

Myrna Buendia, 60, of this city said, "*Sino ba ang may kagustuhan nun? Wala namang may kagustuhan nun* (Who would want an accident like that to happen? Nobody wanted it to happen)."

In an interview yesterday with the INQUIRER at her home in Barangay San Rafael here, Buendia said she normally did not get involved in Revillame's affairs but this time she had to speak out because blaming her son for the stampede was unfair.

"*Nalungkot ako pero ano ang magagawa ko* (I felt sad but what could I do)?" she said. "*Hindi naman kagustuhan ni* Willie *iyon. Gusto nga ni* Willie *makatulong para masiyahan naman ang mga tao* (Willie did not want this to happen. He wanted to help and make people happy)."

Revillame was born in Nueva Ecija but grew up in Manila. When his father died of a heart attack in the 1980s, his mother remarried and settled in Tarlac. Revillame has four half-brothers from his mother's second and third marriages.

The National Bureau of Investigation, meanwhile, is looking into a report some "Wowowee" fans were electrocuted during the stampede.

NBI National Capital Region (NCR) chief Ruel Lasala told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that they would coordinate with Dante Jimenez of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) who presented witnesses claiming they saw victims being electrocuted during the stampede.

"Autopsies conducted by the NBI on some of the victims did not show that they died of electrocution," Lasala said.

The militant Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya yesterday sponsored a Mass in front of the gate where the stampede occurred. *With Margaux C. Ortiz and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

MNLF to ink pact

COTABATO CITY—The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) will send a member to be a signatory to a pre-agreement framework the government will sign with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, next month.

Energy Undersecretary Matanog Mapandi, known in MNLF circles as Commander Diego, said this would allay fears that a territorial dispute could ignite a conflict between the two Moro organizations which are both asserting self-rule in Mindanao.

Director Silvino Cinches of the National Bureau of Investigation, who is closely monitoring the peace process for the Department of Justice, said the pact that would be signed in March was a consolidation of the 1996 peace agreement between the MNLF and the government and that of the proposed pact with the MILF.

Mapandi, himself a member of the government panel, said he would be a signatory to the March pact, a preliminary instrument to a final peace agreement which could be signed in September this year.

Mapandi succeeded Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema, MNLF secretary general, who resigned the MNLF slot in the government panel following the Feb. 11, 2002 military offensives on MILF lairs in the Buliok Complex, in Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

According to reports, the issue of territory was also raised with jailed MNLF leader Nur Misuari for a proposed MNLF-MILF "unity government" in a Federal State of Muslim Mindanao, as proposed by Speaker Jose de Venecia. *Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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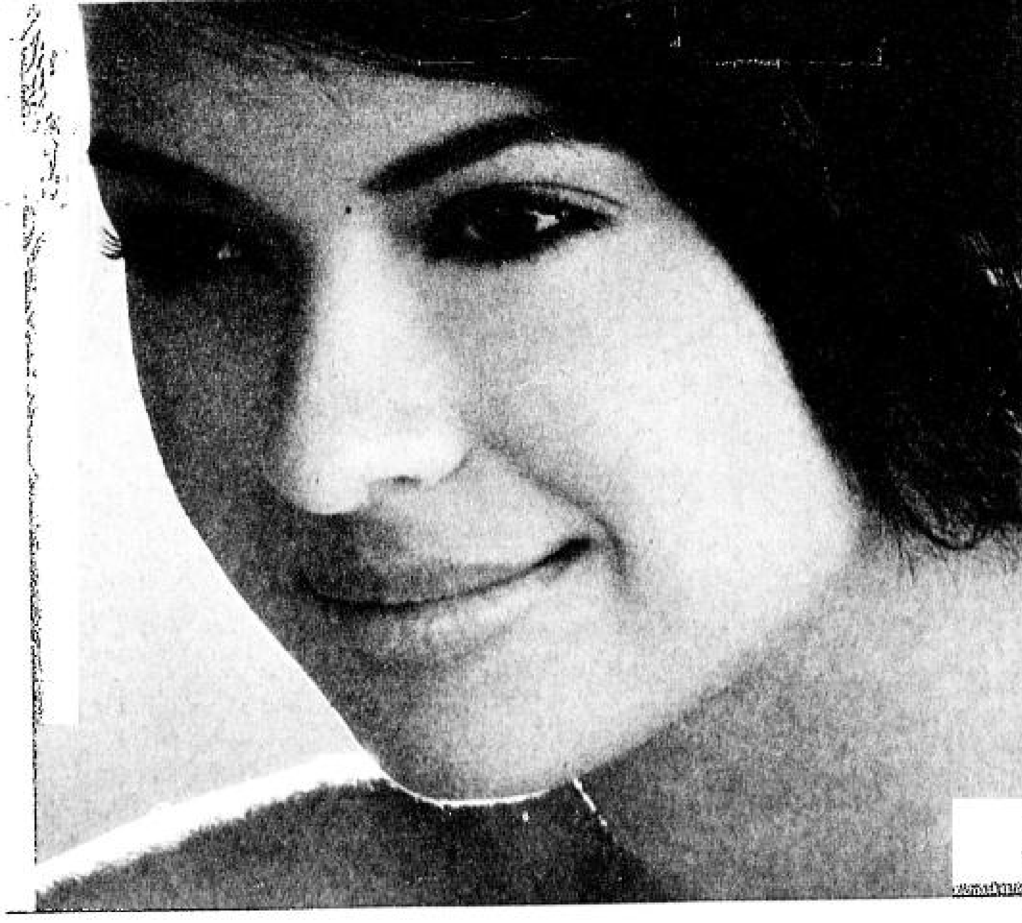

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Prelate hits back: Bishops not ignorant on mining

By Christian V. Esguerra

A SENIOR PRELATE YESTERDAY returned fire against big mining companies criticizing the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) for condemning mining activities in the country.

In a statement, Archbishop Oscar Cruz said bishops should not be treated like they were "ignorant" of the mining industry and the concomitant evil that it brings to local residents.

"The CBCP is once more belittled and even lambasted infallibly by big mining interests in the country," he said. "The CBCP may not have its technical mining jargon but it is in contact with the mass base adversely affected by avaricious mining."

The country's 122 bishops came under fire after they released a pastoral statement saying the Mining Act of 1995 "destroys life."

"Our experiences of environmental tragedies and incidents with the mining transnational corporations belie all assurances of sustainable and responsible mining that the Arroyo administration is claiming," they wrote in the Jan. 29 statement.

Mining executives soon came firing back at the bishops, saying they were in no position to speak against the issue. One critic even compared the prelates to the abusive and intrusive friars during the Spanish period.

Cruz said the bishops were not "ignorant of what wealth is drawn out by mining the land as well as what poisonous dirt, in fact, is left behind for keeps."

He said only in the Philippines were transnational mining corporations allowed to encroach into 35 national conservation priority areas, 32 national integrated protected areas and 17 important bio-diversity areas.

While business may be beneficial, Cruz said it becomes destructive when it begins to exploit. It also becomes unethical when done "at the expense of human persons, the detriment of the common welfare, and the destruction of the environment which spells the lynching of generations yet to come," he said.

"The global market, even transnational industries should have a social conscience. Otherwise, the people they intend to help precisely become their victims," he pointed out.

Cruz's response was, thus far, the most scathing coming from the generally conservative Catholic hierarchy after the pastoral statement.

Borongan Bishop Leonardo Medroso earlier invited critics to a dialogue to thresh out differences over mining.

President Macapagal-Arroyo did that with 12 bishops at a Malacañang dinner the day after the statement was released.

The bishops were among those who personally pushed for the mining issue to be tackled in a pastoral statement during the recent CBCP plenary assembly. Their pastoral jurisdictions were directly affected by mining activities.

In the statement, Cruz said the CBCP once more was crying out against the environmental damage and disasters caused by large-scale mining in the country.

"It again pleads for mining restraint in favor of the small communities oppressed and dislocated, the many families impoverished and rendered ill by irresponsible mining of the land," he said.

Another gambling game gets Cruz's dander up

ANTI-GAMBLING CRUSADER Archbishop Oscar Cruz has denounced keno, a numbers game resembling bingo that the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office is planning to launch.

Like "jueteng," the illegal numbers game Cruz opposes, keno would only victimize the poor who are sure to become addicted to it, the Lingayen-Dagupan prelate said in a statement.

"It promises excitement plus huge winnings but, as usual, the gamblers are ultimately the losers. The gambling operators are the final winners," said Cruz.

Keno is played like bingo except that the player gets to choose the numbers on his ticket. Keno cards display up to 80 numbers and a player can pick as many or as few numbers as he wants. The winning numbers are then drawn during bingo-like sessions.

Cruz said the Arroyo administration was the "biggest gambling lord in the country" and blamed it and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) for infecting the PCSO with the "gambling virus."

The prelate, whose high-profile crusade against "jueteng" last year led to a congressional investigation and short-lived exile for the President's husband and son, again denounced the evils of gambling, legalized or not.

"While someone somewhere might strike it rich somehow through gambling, gambling impoverishes thousands. This is the truth notwithstanding all arguments to the contrary," he said.

The return of jueteng in many provinces and the proliferation of masiao meant that operators are back in business, Cruz said.

"The poor are again exploited. The gullible continue to be fooled. And their money ultimately lands in the fat bank accounts of the gambling financiers and their protectors and well-chosen beneficiaries," he said.

Jerome Aning

Corrections

IN THE FEB. 9 ISSUE, Reggie Aspiras' column, "Kitchen Rescue," in the Lifestyle section on Page C1—"A love affair with ostrich"—misspelled the name of an environmental organization. The group's name is Audubon—not Audobon—International.

* * *

IN LATER EDITIONS of the Feb. 10 issue, a front page story—"S&P upbeat on RP debt but Moody's pessimistic"—misstated the symbol used by Standard & Poor's to represent a credit rating of three notches below investment grade. The symbol used by S&P for such a credit rating is BB-, not Bt.

* * *

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 13, 2006
6th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Jas 1:1-11
Gospel: Mark 8:11-13

The Pharisees came and started to argue with Jesus. Hoping to embarrass him, they asked for some heavenly sign. Then his spirit was moved. He gave a deep sigh and said, "Why do the people of this present time ask for a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this people." Then he left them, got into the boat again and went to the other side of the lake.

Commentary

The letter of James begins with a call to joy in the face of trial and testing so that we can learn enduring faithfulness and become mature. We are to ask for wisdom and faith and to live humbly, sharing all we have, not clinging to wealth which lasts for nothing. And Jesus is tested again and again by those without faith who want signs. Jesus sighs from the depths of his spirit (aggrieved) and says: "No sign will be given," and he leaves, crossing the lake to the other side.

Do we grieve Jesus with our want of signs and lack of faith, being immature and grabbing at what the world says makes us who we are? Lent is approaching. Time to look at our lives from Jesus' point of view.

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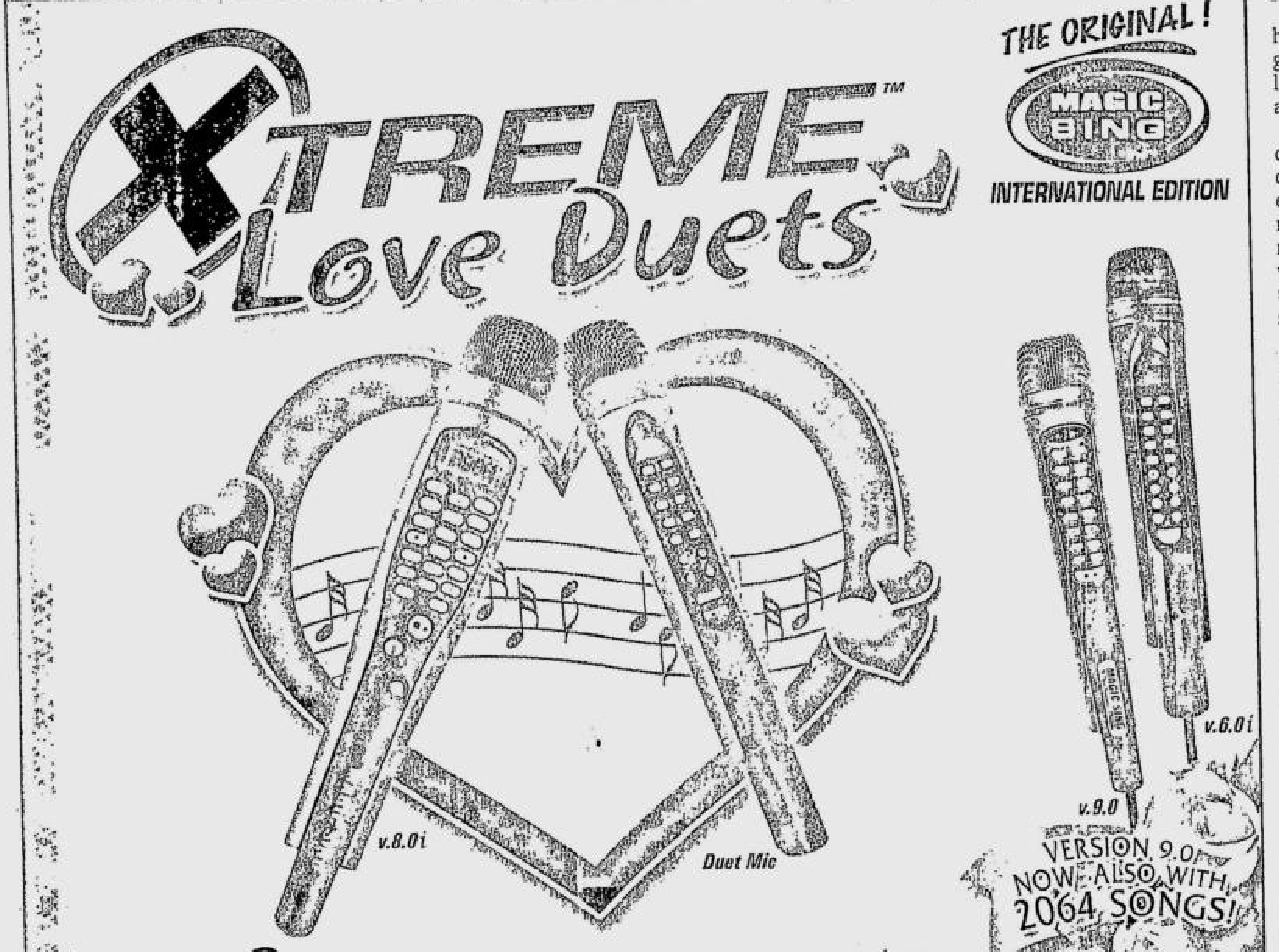

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UN exec raps RP failure to apply eco laws

INFANTA, QUEZON—ONE OF THE MAJOR sources of international aid in the country has slammed the government for failing to enforce its environmental laws, further exposing the country to natural disasters.

The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) said the "vicious cycle" of logging in areas like Quezon had not stopped even after flash floods and landslides displaced more than 265,000 people in 2004.

"The political rhetoric in Manila is just passing wind... People need to be prosecuted. There are environmental laws but there is a lack of enforcement," Unicef representative to Manila Dr. Nicholas Alipui said in an interview.

Alipui and World Health Organization (WHO) country representative Jean Marc Olive were here Friday to check on the rehabilitation and development projects the UN had funded after the 2004 disaster.

Alipui noted that people were rebuilding their homes in exactly the same areas where landslides had destroyed them in the first place.

Alipui said the government had also failed to stop both small-time illegal loggers and commercial loggers from operating, destroying the remaining forests of the Sierra Madre.

Deforestation was blamed for the flash floods and landslides that killed more than 1,500 people in November 2004, but the Department of Environment and Natural Resources denied that this was the cause of the floods.

Alipui and Olive also met with Dumagat leaders and learned that members of the military in Quezon had seized relief goods sent by Unicef to indigenous peoples as part of the international aid to victims of the 2004 floods.

Melicio Rutaquio of the Tulay Ugnayan ng mga Organisasyong Katutubo sa Sierra Madre (TUNOD-KSM) said members of the Army's 16th Infantry Brigade raided the homes of the Dumagat in Sitio Malatunglan in General Nakar in June last year.

The military had asked the Dumagat to leave their communities because of encounters with New People's Army rebels in the area.

When the Dumagat came back, they found their homes open and their farming tools, along with the blankets, mats and pans from Unicef gone, Rutaquio said.

"The military is accusing them that our development assistance is being used to help the NPA, and that mars the recovery of the communities," Unicef project officer Nonoy Fajardo said.

Blanche S. Rivera

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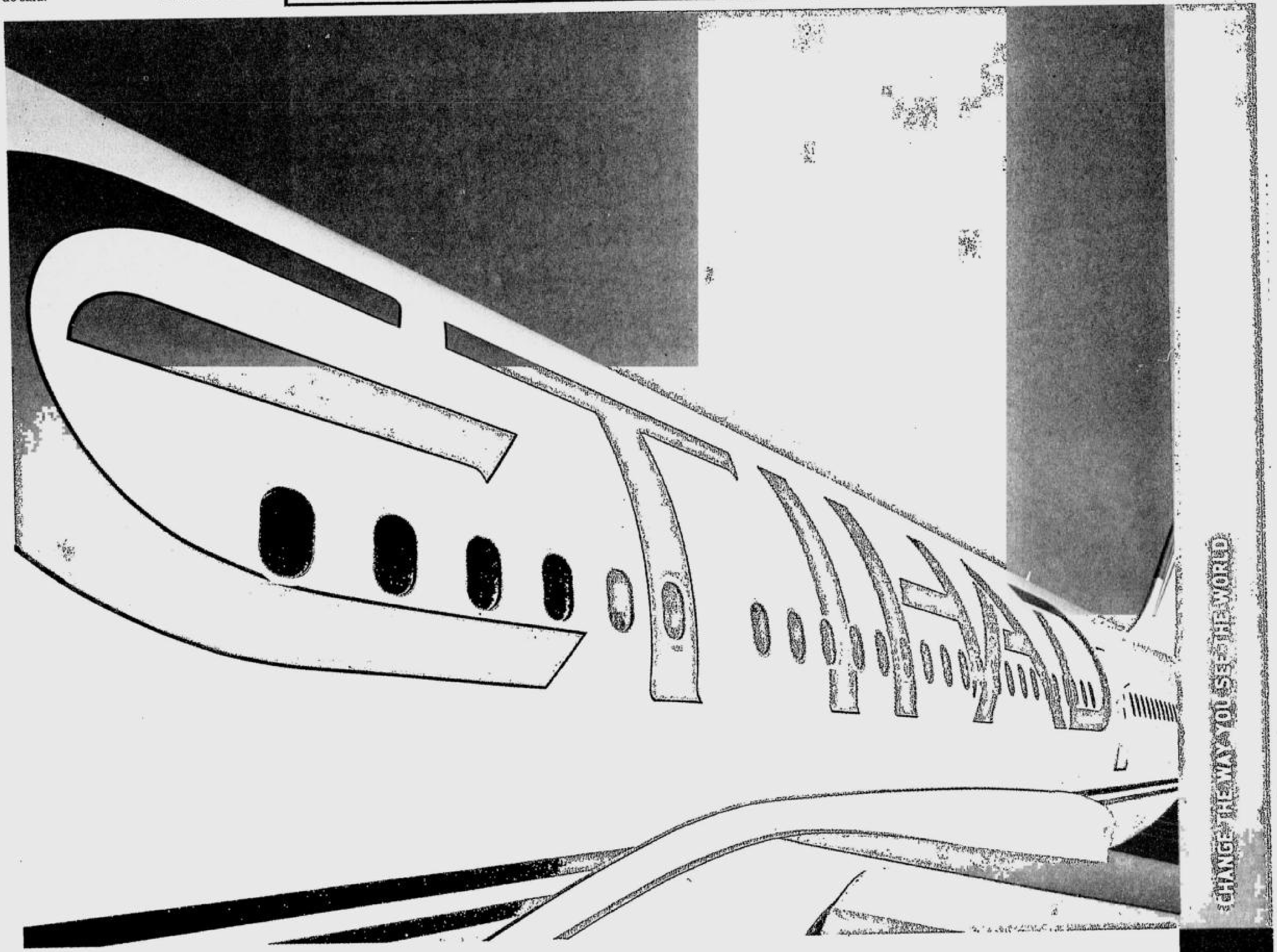

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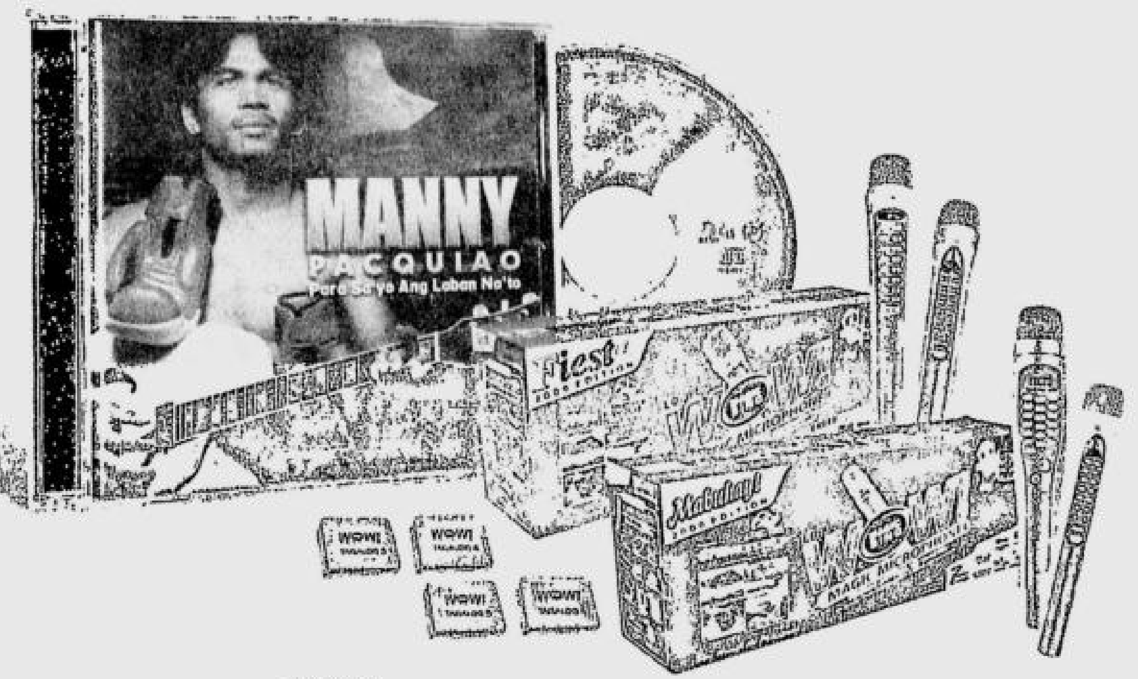

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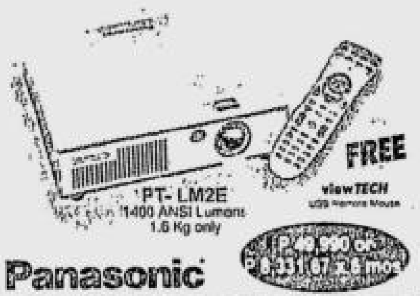

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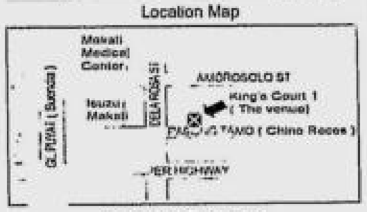

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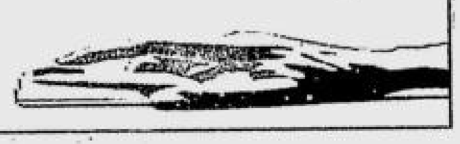

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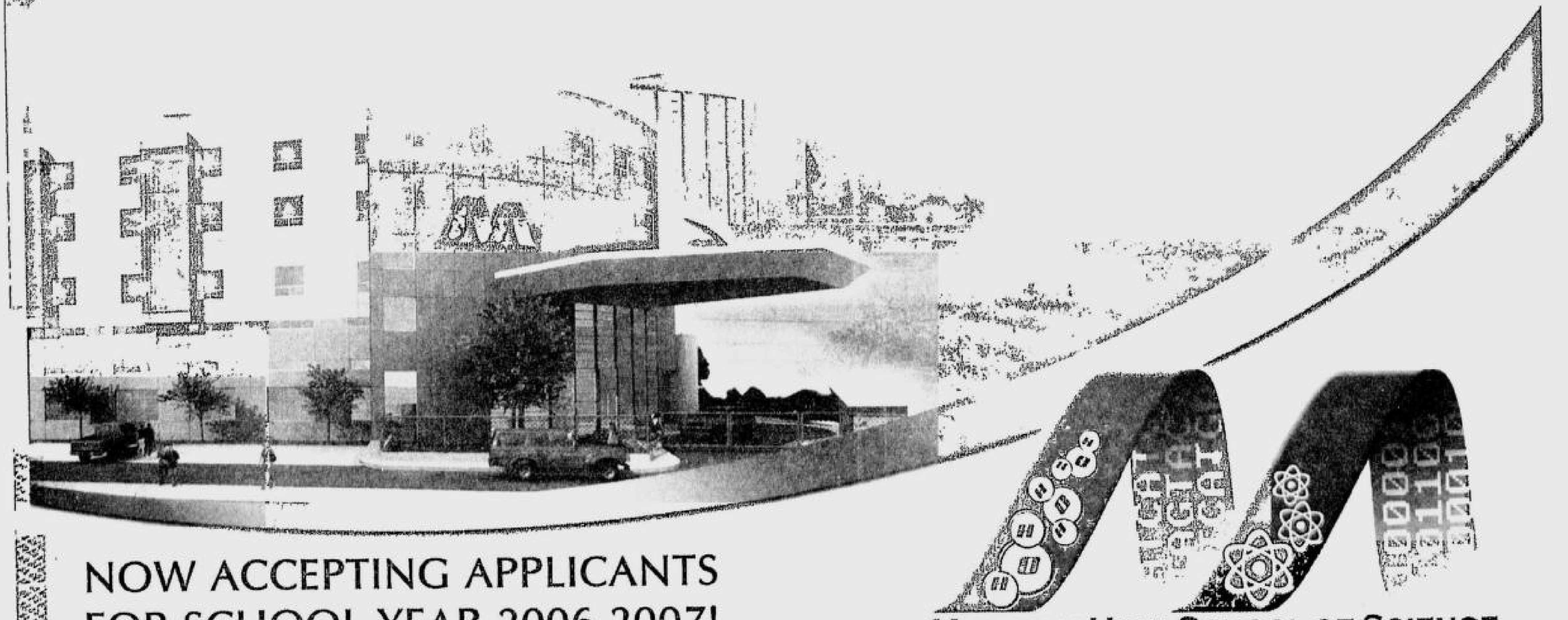

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Coast Guard raises alert on bombing anniversary

By Leila B. Salaverria

IN ANTICIPATION OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY of the Valentine's Day bombing in several parts of the country, the Philippine Coast Guard placed its personnel nationwide on heightened alert yesterday.

The watch on ports in Manila would be specially tight, said PCG spokesperson Lt. Commander Joseph Coyme, noting that these were among the busiest in the country.

"PCG personnel are always vigilant against illegal activities, but we are further increasing our efforts now that the first anniversary of the bombing is coming up," Coyme said in a phone interview.

The Feb. 14, 2005, bombings took place in the cities of Makati, General Santos and Davao. The Abu Sayyaf Group claimed responsibility for the blasts.

Makati was the worst hit after a bomb ripped through a bus on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (Edsa), leaving four people dead and over 60 wounded.

Since then, two confessed members of the Abu Sayyaf Group and one Indonesian bomb expert with ties to the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror group were convicted for the Makati bombing.

In General Santos, three died after a blast outside a mall, while one was killed when an explosive went off at a bus terminal in Davao.

The PCG, especially its sea marshals, have been keeping watch against terrorist and criminal activities at port areas by inspecting bags, packages and container vans for illegal or explosive materials.

Security tightened around Magdalo men going to court

FOLLOWING REPORTS OF A PLAN TO spring members of the Magdalo group from detention, the military has directed its National Capital Region Command to take over the transport of the mutinous soldiers from their cells to the trial court and back.

While the renegade soldiers' respective service units—the Army, Navy and Air Force—shall maintain custody and provide close-in security, a military spokesperson said the responsibility of making sure they left and got back to camp safely would now fall on the Armed Forces of the Philippines' NCR Command.

"Our duty is to ensure that they get transported to the hearing. We will provide security going to the hearing and make sure (they are able to) attend (their trial) safely," said Capt. Ramon Zagala, NCR Command spokesperson.

The Magdalo group's leaders are being held at the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (Isapf) compound in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City while the other members are detained at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City.

The NCR Command shall provide the convoys and secure the route to the Makati City Regional Trial Court where the soldiers are being tried on coup d'etat charges for the July 2003 takeover of the Oakwood apartment-hotel, Zagala said.

"The purpose is to have only one commander, General Cabalquinto," Zagala said, adding that AFP chief of staff Gen. Generoso Senga had ordered the new setup two weeks ago.

Lt. Gen. Alan Cabalquinto is chief of the NCR Command.

"*Dati kanya-kanya* (Before it was every man for himself). Each service unit had its own peculiarities (in securing the mutineers)," Zagala said.

While Zagala said he was not aware of any plans by their colleagues to free the mutineers, he admitted the shift in tactics was done primarily to prevent the Magdalo group from escaping.

"Because of the escape of the four Magdalo from their detention center and the escape of Captain Faeldon at the Makati RTC, these plans were made so that we can prevent another escape," he said. *Luige A. del Puerto*

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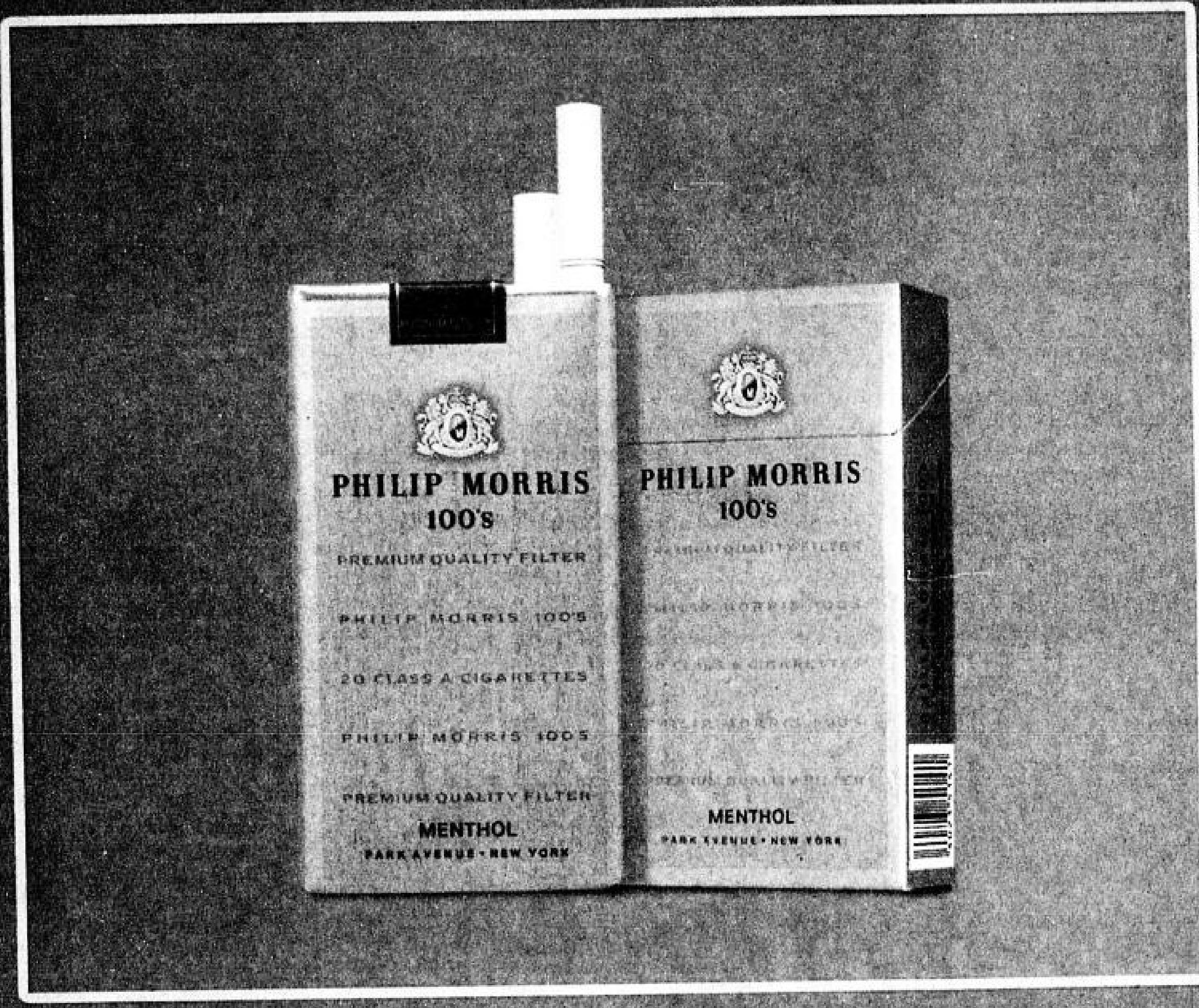

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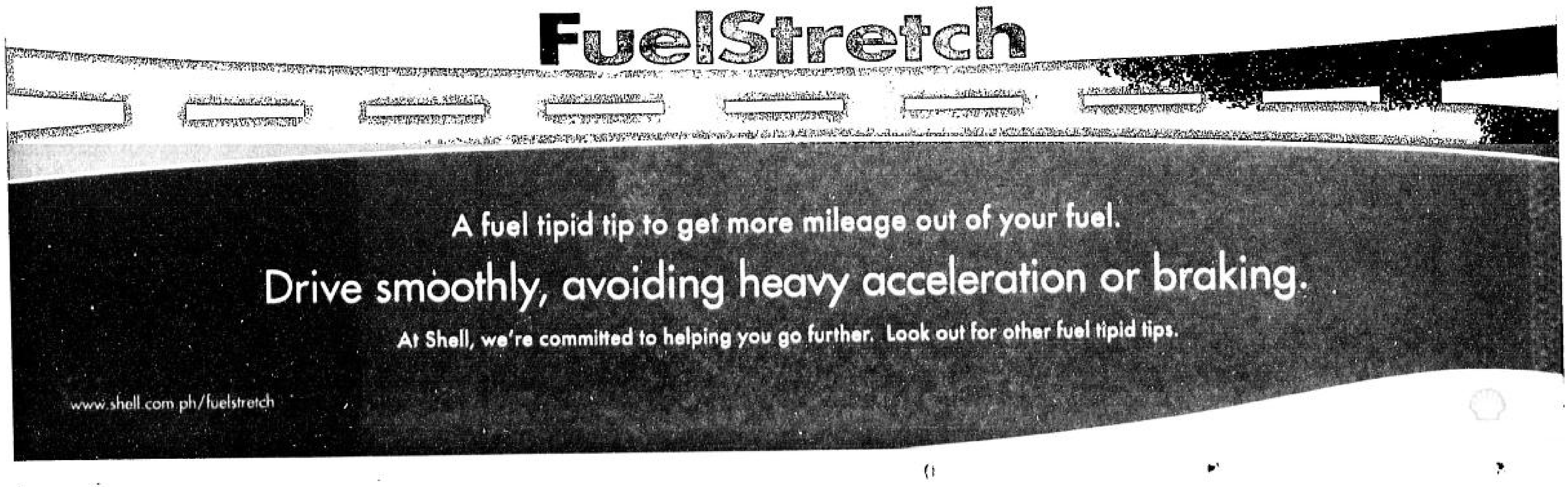

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Bird flu detected in Italy, Greece

ROME—THE DEADLY BIRD FLU HAS REACHED WESTERN EUROPE, with Italy and Greece announcing they had detected the H5N1 strain of the virus in dead swans, while the European Union confirmed the presence of the deadly strain in Bulgaria.

Saturday's announcement by Greece and Italy comes a day after the opening of the Winter Games in Turin, and marks the first time the potentially dangerous virus was detected in a EU country.

Authorities in Italy, Greece and Bulgaria said there were no reports of people being infected, and Italian Health Minister Francesco Storace sought to reassure Italians that the outbreak posed no immediate threat to humans, as the virus had only affected wild birds.

"It's a relatively safe situation for human health, less so for animal health," Storace said.

Also Saturday, authorities in Nigeria said they were investigating whether a deadly bird flu strain discovered in the West African country last week had spread to humans after at least two children were reported ill.

Bird flu has killed at least 88 people in Asia and Turkey since 2003, according to the World Health Organization. It has been ravaging poultry stocks across Asia since 2003, killing or forcing the slaughter of more than 140 million birds.

Almost all the human deaths have been linked to contact with infected poultry, but experts fear the virus could mutate into a form that spreads easily among humans, possibly sparking a human flu pandemic that could kill millions.

Experts said they were reassured by the fact that the virus has been detected in wild birds rather than on poultry farms, where it would be more likely to spread and where people would be in closer contact to infected birds.

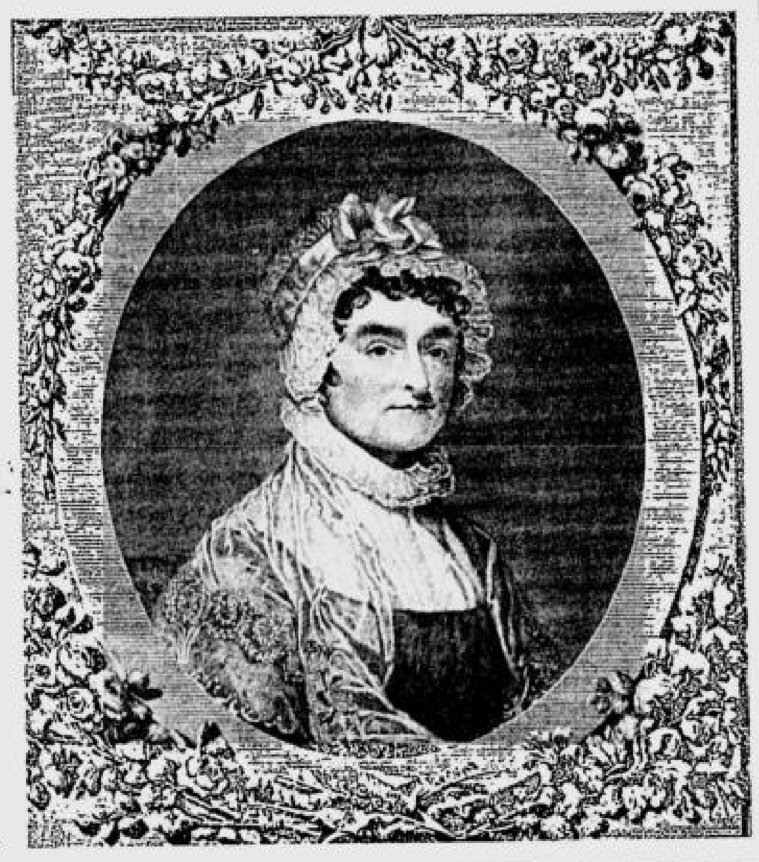
"The risk to humans is less if the disease is in wildlife than if it is in poultry," said Juan Lubroth, a senior animal health officer at the Rome-based UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

The virus was found in five swans in the three southern Italian regions of Puglia, Calabria and Sicily, Storace said. The swans had arrived from the Balkans, he said, likely pushed south by cold weather.

The European Union issued a statement saying that Italy has agreed to apply the same precautionary measures as those adopted by Greece a day earlier. They include creating a three-kilometer high-risk, protection zone around each outbreak area, and a surveillance zone of an additional seven kilometers.

Tests will be done on samples of domestic birds inside the protection zone, where poultry is to be separated to avoid contact with other domestic birds. Birds that are infected or suspected of being infected will be killed.

Hunting wild birds will be banned in both zones, and poultry cannot travel out of the surveillance zone, the Italian health ministry said. *AP*



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Abigail Adams, wife of the United States' second president, John Adams, is seen in an undated engraving from a painting by Gilbert Stuart. She was the first wife of a president to live in the White House, and hung her family's laundry out to dry in the unfinished East Room. AP

Illegals working in US don't know they can get legal aid, says study

By Cara Anna

KINGSTON, NEW YORK—SERGIO DE LA Cruz says the abuse began when he was picked up at a day labor site and taken to a construction site in New York City's Bronx borough, where his boss took his Mexican identity papers and locked him in at night.

For four months, de la Cruz says he was locked into three separate sites, most of the time sleeping on a plank bed and defecating into a plastic bag.

As America's use of day labor grows, legal aid experts say this is one of the more striking complaints. But just as striking, they say, is that de la Cruz didn't know someone could help him.

In the first national survey of day laborers, released last month, nearly half of 2,660 workers interviewed said they'd been cheated out of pay in the past two months. Almost 45 percent said they hadn't been given food and water. More than one-fourth had been abandoned at a work site.

And 70 percent said they didn't know where to report such abuse, or how.

The survey illustrates a key problem in the story of day labor: About three-quarters of the estimated 117,000 day laborers in the United States are here illegally. What happens when they say they're treated illegally as well?

"Most people don't know employment law applies despite their immigration status," says Tricia Khkalec, co-founder of the Kingston-based Workers Rights Law Center. "They want the jobs, you know what I mean? They just want to get paid."

The center is one of a growing number that offer legal help to day laborers. The National Legal Aid and Defender Association in Washington, D.C., says there's no good estimate of such legal aid centers in the United States, but the national survey found 63 day labor worker centers offering legal or other services in 17 states.

But finding and educating day laborers still isn't easy, says Laura Stack, managing attorney in the northern Virginia office of the Virginia Justice Center. Outreach workers make regular early morning visits to day labor sites, but there's a lot of turnover, Stack says. "There are definitely people we're not reaching."

Most cases come by word of mouth, and sometimes quite late. Stack last week met a Bolivian man who said he'd worked on a suburban construction site for two-and-a-half months without pay.

"We tell them that if you're not paid in two weeks, be very, very afraid," Stack says.

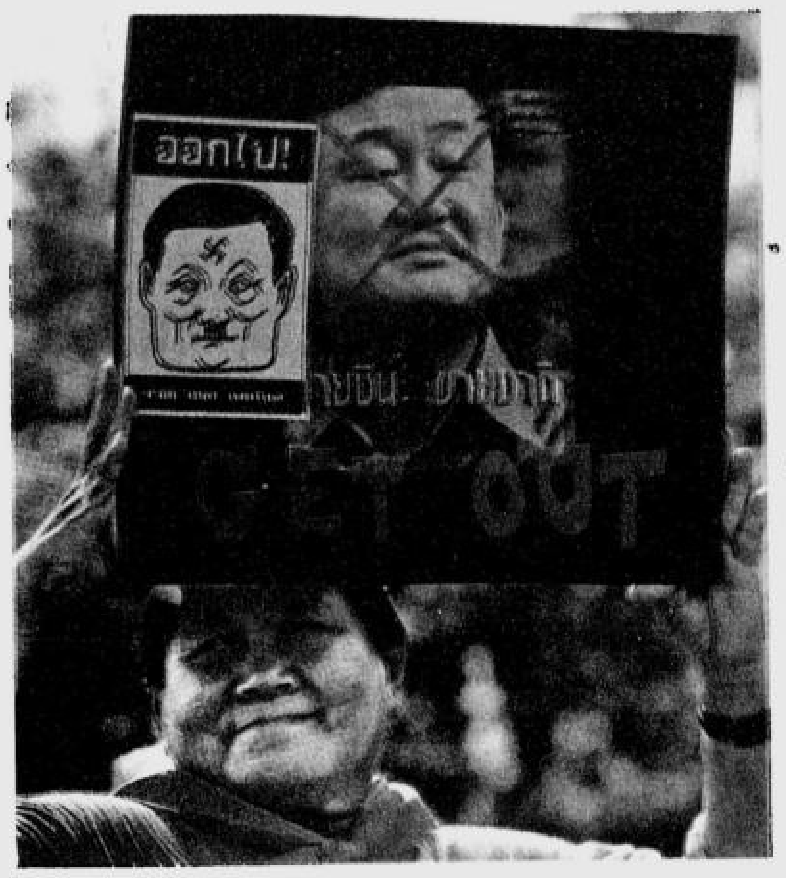
"They expect once a month someone not to pay them," says Salvador Reza, who works with the National Day Labor Organizing Network in Phoenix. "It's gotten to a point where they see it as a business loss."

Reza says the local day labor center takes down the license plate numbers of employers' vehicles, and workers are told to write down as much information as possible, such as names and addresses. But people hesitate to report abuse to police because they think they'll be deported, he says.

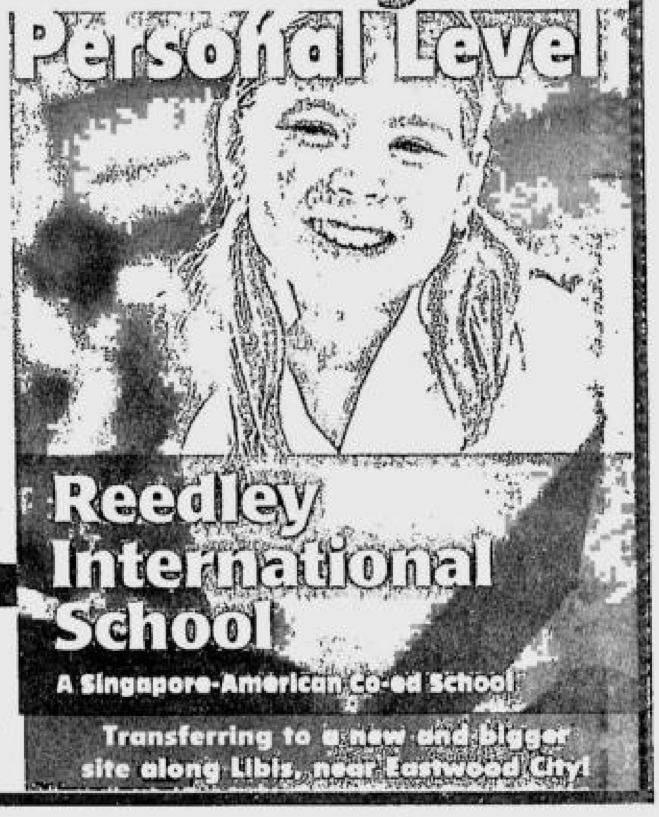
On the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance says it's sometimes difficult finding workers even to repay them for their lost wages. The group has distributed thousands of educational leaflets to day laborers rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina, and it has filed 20 complaints so far with the US Department of Labor on behalf of hundreds of workers over wage violations.

"Without exception, they did not know about the Department of Labor or their right to be paid," says Mira president Bill Chandler.

De la Cruz waited months before slipping out of the construction site. A year and a half later, in late December, the Workers Rights Law Center helped him file a lawsuit against his employer in US District Court. *AP*



A THAI protester holds a placard assailing Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra during an antigovernment rally in Bangkok, Feb. 11. Thaksin, under political pressure, has announced a referendum on amending the constitution. AP



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Campaign to unseat Thaksin gathers pace

BANGKOK—A CAMPAIGN TO UNSEAT THAI Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is gathering momentum as more protest groups jump on board, analysts said Sunday after thousands rallied for the second straight week.

Thaksin, who has been shaken by the demonstrations and the departure of two Cabinet ministers, has responded to his critics by saying he is willing to hold a constitutional referendum in April.

But the premier, who marked five years in power last week, has repeatedly refused to quit despite a furor over his family's $1.9-billion tax-free sale of the telecoms conglomerate that he founded before entering politics.

Some 20,000 protesters massed in a royal square on Saturday for a peaceful eight-hour protest, but the turnout was well down from the 50,000 who gathered there last week.

However, organizers said it was an impressive crowd considering police had threatened to arrest those who defied a ban on rallying at the plaza, and political observers said it was no sign that the movement had lost steam.

The campaign was kicked off last year by Sondhi Limthongkul, a media mogul and former staunch Thaksin supporter who was admired for daring to take on the powerful premier, but dogged by charges he was mounting a personal vendetta.

On the weekend he handed over the baton to an alliance of dozens of civil society groups including privatization opponents, trade campaigners, and human rights and media freedom activists.

"I predict that the protest movement will be prolonged as it has expanded to include students and nongovernmental organizations," said Sukhum Chaleysap, a pollster and academic.

"Therefore this February and March, the period before elections for the (upper house) Senate, represent a very real threat to the government's stability," he said.

The campaign went into a higher gear after last month's sale of telecoms giant Shin Corp. to Singapore's state-linked investment arm Temasek, which drew criticism that strategic Thai assets were being put in foreign hands.

The campaign has until now been dominated by middle-class urban Thais, but the new protest alliance is trying to garner nationwide backing with rallies this month in the poor but populous northeast.

It will also go the Muslim-majority south, the scene of a two-year insurgency that has left 1,100 people dead and made Thaksin extremely unpopular for his allegedly clumsy handling of the crisis.

The rallies will culminate in another mass protest in the capital on Feb. 26.

"This is the first time in Thailand that many groups in civil society are getting together and focusing on key issues such as problems of corruption and political reform," said political analyst Panitan Wattanayakorn.

He said that now the movement had shaken Thais out of their political lethargy, it needed to produce a leader who can successfully manage the diverse alliance which is united only by a shared frustration with Thaksin.

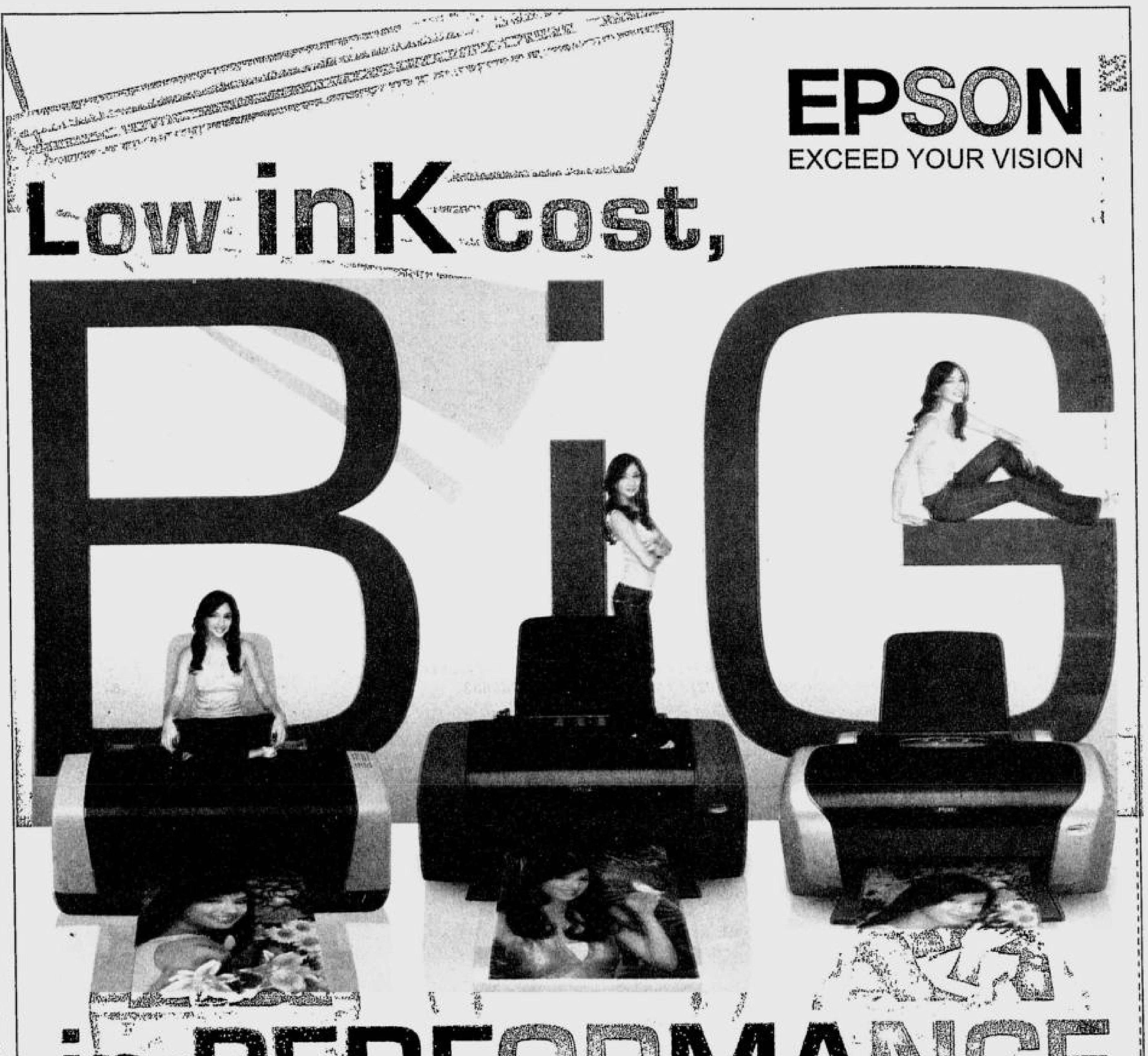
"If we have a unified leader, it could pose a serious threat to the government," he said. "They have just got started. This is only the beginning."

"Four years ago, the prime minister was unchallenged. But not any more. People realize we can challenge the prime minister and we can press him."

Academics and activists have dismissed the referendum offer as hollow, saying the constitution was not a major issue and that the government would frame the ballot in such a way that would ensure its failure.

"The final answer from Thaksin must be his resignation as he clearly lacks moral authority. It is too late for him to do something else like revise the constitution," said Suriyasai Katasila from Campaign for Popular Democracy.

University students are gathering the 50,000 signatures needed to launch an impeachment debate against the premier, but despite the furore he remains in an extremely strong position after a thumping election victory last year. *AFP*



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Sharon recovery dims

JERUSALEM—ALREADY SLIM chances for comatose Ariel Sharon's recovery from a massive stroke dimmed further, doctors said, after he needed emergency surgery to removed a decayed part of his large intestine. The hospital where he is being treated said Sunday he stabilized after the operation but is in critical condition.

The four-hour operation on Saturday was successful, doctors said, but Sharon has yet to awaken since his stroke on Jan. 4.

Israelis closely followed their 77-year-old leader's latest ordeal, with TV stations repeatedly breaking into regular programming for updates, but the country already has come to terms with his departure from politics.

Sharon's political heir, Ehud Olmert, quickly took the reins as acting prime minister after Sharon's Jan. 4 stroke, and appears poised to lead Sharon's centrist Kadima Party to victory in March 28 elections.

Sharon was rushed to surgery Saturday morning after doctors, who had noticed abdominal swelling, conducted a CT scan and a laparoscopy, or insertion of a small camera through the abdominal wall.

Surgeons detected necrotic—or dead—tissue in the bowels and removed 50 cm, or one-third, of the large intestine, said Hadassah Hospital director Dr. Shlomo Mor-Yosef. It was his seventh operation since suffering the stroke. *AP*

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Pope blesses ill Catholics

VATICAN CITY—POPE BENEDICT XVI blessed ailing faithful on Saturday, and prayed that no one be left alone at a time of need so that the sick can maintain their "human dignity."

The Pontiff made the remarks during a Mass at St. Peter's Basilica for the World Day of the Sick, where patients, their nurses and caregivers gathered to pray.

"May the Lord make sure no one is alone and abandoned in a time of need, but on the contrary, may live even their illness according to human dignity," Benedict said.

Speaking of the role of doctors, nurses and volunteers, the Pope said he hoped "the love of God (would) be always alive in their hearts, so as to enliven their daily work, projects, initiatives, and especially their interaction with the sick."

Benedict also made a special mention of the mentally ill, saying the Catholic church was close to them.

He praised the ecclesiastical community for its initiatives helping the sick worldwide. *AP*

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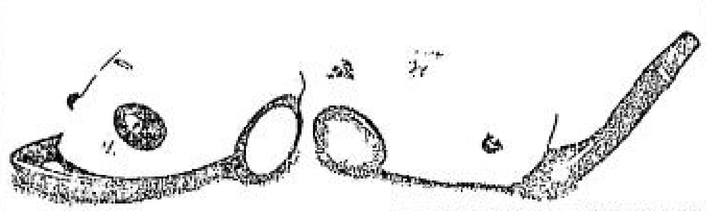
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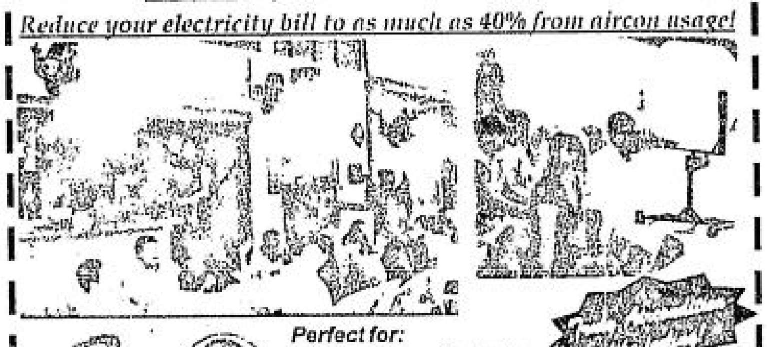
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Iran blames Israel for cartoons, warns US, Europe

TEHRAN, IRAN—IRAN'S HARDline president accused the United States and Europe of being "hostages of Zionism" and said they should pay a heavy price for the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad that have triggered worldwide protests.

In a speech marking the 27th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution Saturday, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad linked his public rage with Israel and the cartoons satirizing Islam's most revered figure.

Ahmadinejad, who is at odds with much of the international community over Iran's disputed nuclear program, launched an anti-Israeli campaign last fall when he said the Holocaust was a "myth" and that Israel should be "wiped off the map."

"Now in the West insulting the prophet is allowed, but questioning the Holocaust is considered a crime," he said. "We ask, why do you insult the prophet? The response is that it is a matter of freedom, while in fact they (who insult the founder of Islam) are hostages of the Zionists. And the people of the US and Europe should pay a heavy price for becoming hostages to Zionists."

Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik said on behalf of the European Union that Ahmadinejad's remarks should not be silently accepted.

"These remarks stand in complete contradiction to the efforts of numerous political and religious leaders who after the events of the past few days are campaigning for a dialogue between cultures that is marked by mutual respect," Plassnik said.

Plassnik was referring to appeals for calm made in recent days by Arab governments, Muslim clerics and newspaper columnists who fear the sometimes deadly violence has only increased anti-Islamic sentiment in the West.

The drawings—including one that depicts the prophet with a turban shaped like a bomb with a burning fuse—were first published in September and recently reprinted in other European publications that said it was an issue of freedom of speech.

Islam widely holds that representations of the prophet are banned for fear they could lead to idolatry. *AP*

3 Yemen editors face trial for reprinting cartoons

SAN'A, YEMEN—THREE CHIEF editors of Yemeni papers will stand trial on charges of offending Islam for publishing the Danish cartoons of Islam's prophet, information ministry officials said Saturday.

The Yemen Observer, al-Ra'i el-Am and al-Huriya will also have their licenses suspended, the officials said. The three privately owned weekly newspapers printed the drawings last week, amid Muslim outrage that led to attacks on European embassies and angry demonstrations around the world.

Information ministry officials said the three editors are charged with offending the prophet of Islam and violating religions.

Bin Sahel, the deputy prosecutor, said that he started interrogating the editors of the Observer and al-Huriya on Saturday about their reasons for publishing the cartoons.

The three newspapers condemned the government action in statements issued Saturday, characterizing the step as an "illegal instrument that targets the newspapers."

Kamal al-Alfi, al-Ra'i el-Am's chief editor, called the prosecution political, pointing out that his paper previously published evidence of some government officials' involvement in corruption cases.

"This is unacceptable," he said. "They are using this as a pretext to close the newspaper." He said his paper had been ordered closed once before. *AP*

MEMBERS of the the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club hold a traditional Jazz Funeral to remember those who perished in Hurricane Katrina and aftermath Feb. 11 on Jackson Avenue in New Orleans. AP

Mardi Gras throws barbs at Katrina, US politicians

NEW ORLEANS—MARDI GRAS HAS LONG been an occasion for the city to laugh at tragedy and aim barbs at authorities, and given all the pain New Orleans has suffered in the past year the irreverence should reach new heights this season.

Armed with sharp tongues and images such as the blue tarpaulins that still protect broken roofs across the city, the clubs that stage Mardi Gras parades are targeting Hurricane Katrina and the politicians they blame for the chaotic response to the catastrophe.

"It is hard living here now. We need to have our opportunity to release," said Keith Twitchell, one of the organizers of Saturday's Krewe du Vieux parade. "If you don't laugh, you're dead. There's a lot to cry about here."

Krewe du Vieux has used its parade to mock corporations and politicians every year for the last two decades.

"It's just we have more material this year," Twitchell said before the parade, themed "C'est Levee," a pun on the French phrase "C'est la vie," meaning "that's life."

Floats and props built for the Saturday evening parade in the French Quarter included hand-pulled carts elaborately decorated with blue tarps, fake broken levees, cardboard travel trailers and effigies of Mayor Ray Nagin and Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco.

One display asked France to buy Louisiana back, suggesting the state might get better treatment than it has from the American government. And in place of a parade map, the Krewe du Vieux had a "projected path" adorned with a swirly hurricane symbol.

Still, in the midst of revelry and satire, even the city known as the Big Easy has a serious side.

The Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, a 90-year-old historically black group that holds one of the city's most beloved Mardi Gras parades, held a service and lit 10 candles in honor of club members who have died since the storm.

They also lit an eleventh candle to honor the hundreds of people killed by Katrina. *AP*

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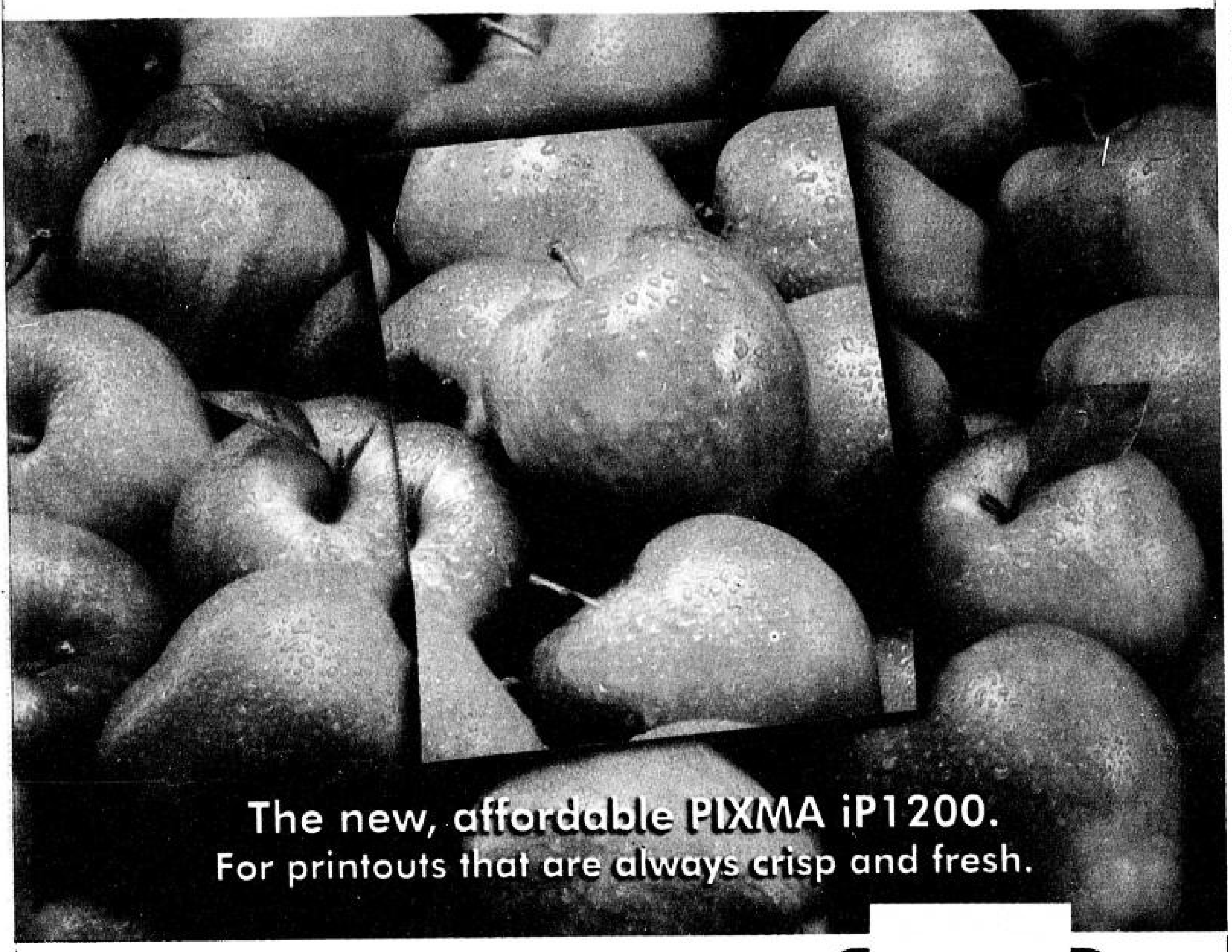
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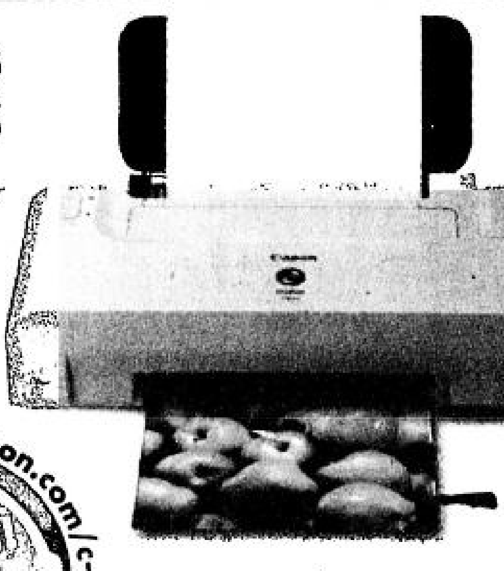

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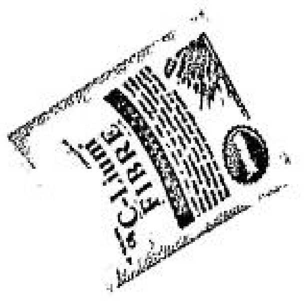

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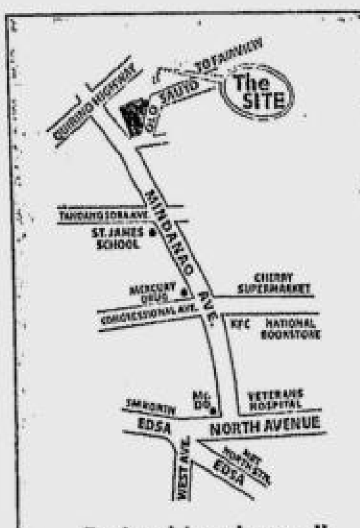

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OPINION

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Silent stampede

EDITORIALS

THE NEWS OUT OF PASIG CITY LAST FRIDAY, A mere week after the Ultra stampede, was equally hard to believe. A veritable arcade of "shabu" restaurants, which could accommodate hundreds of customers at any given time, was discovered thriving in the heart of the city—a mere half-kilometer away from the district police headquarters and city hall.

Entrance to the "arcade" was for a fee; like some other commercial establishments, it even offered a discount on group rates. Inside the 600-square-meter compound, customers could choose from a menu of shabu-related services, from buying the drug per gram, to renting drug paraphernalia, to hiring the use of DVD players (or perhaps even prostitutes, a police officer said) in order to while away the time. All told, some 40 shanties served as shabu "restaurants," the stalls rented out for short-term drug sessions.

After the massive police raid on Friday, the country's top cop visited the site, and then described himself in a state of utter disbelief. It was "incomprehensible," PNP Chief Director General Arturo Lomibao said. The raid led to the arrest of over 300 people caught inside the compound, including 59 minors—and to the sacking of every policeman in the nearest precinct.

Lomibao is right; the shabu arcade in what nearby residents called Sitio Mapayapa is truly incomprehensible. The concept itself, of a "one-stop shop" (as another police officer phrased it) for shabu, of a flea market for the country's most widely used illegal drug, boggles the mind; but the fact that such a large operation had thrived for about a year, right under the noses of the local government and the Eastern Police District, beggars the imagination.

The impact of such a "community" cannot be overstated. A leader of the raiding team spoke about the two pregnant teenagers who were caught in the bust. "They were not customers. The children were being used as runners for the different stalls. They were exposed to the buying and selling of shabu. What happens when they grow up?"

But if their future was bleak, their present is not exactly bright either. Already, they are like victims of a silent, slow-motion stampede: pulled inexorably by the tide of events, unable to cry for help or perhaps are simply unheard.

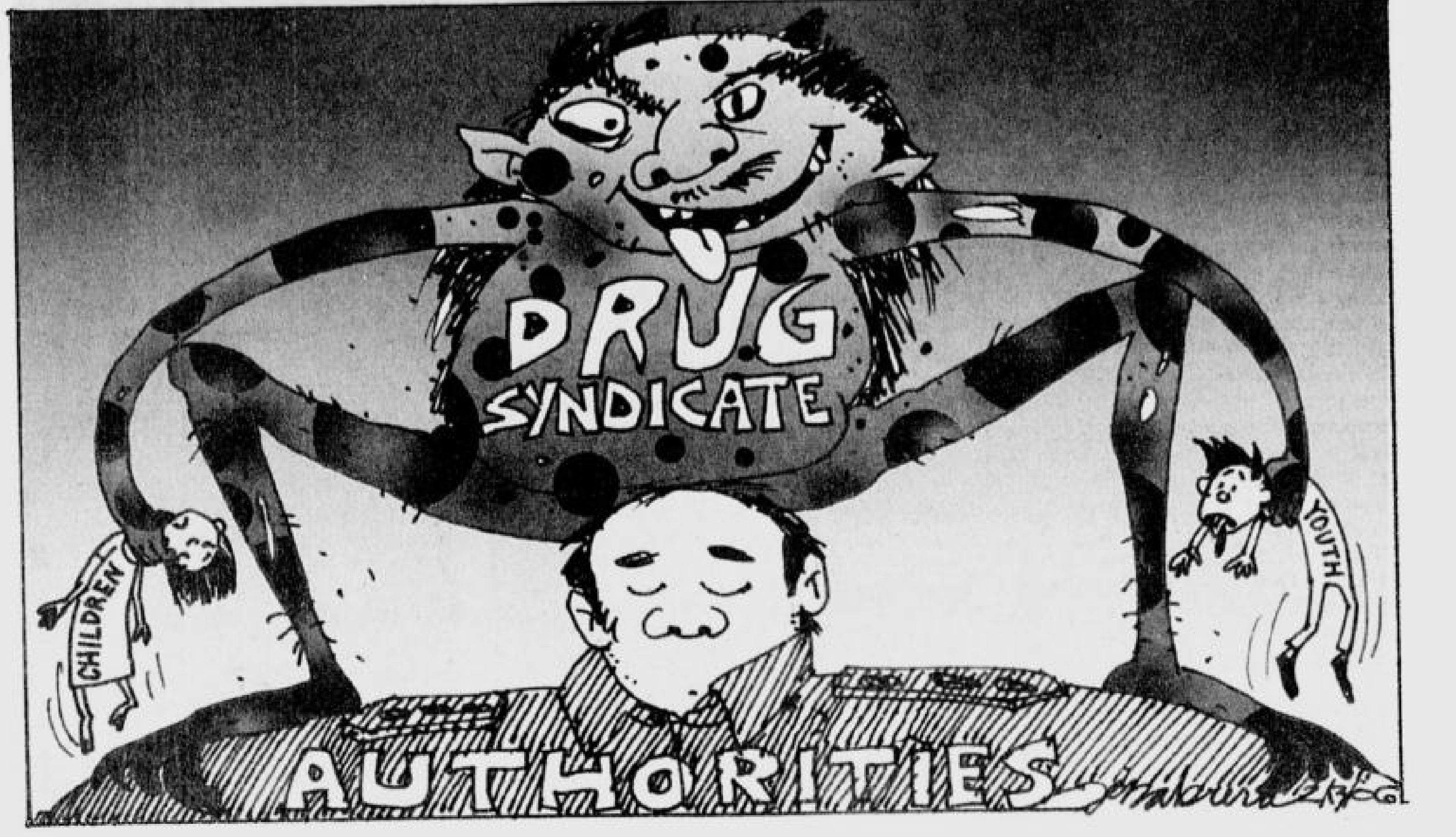
It is incumbent on the many stakeholders in Pasig society—not only the PNP and the national and local governments, but also civic clubs, church groups and business chambers—to rush in and fill the vacuum. The local police must be held to account, as must those in local positions of power who have had a hand in the emergence of the arcade. But the government's social welfare agencies are overworked and underfunded; they need help in assisting the minors caught in the arcade's web (there must be more of them, than the 59 in government custody). That's where NGOs can come in. The arcade itself must not reopen for business. That is the only way meaning can emerge out of incomprehensibility.

Virtual insult

IS PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO AFRAID OF Edsa I? Going by her official schedule, it seems she is intent on avoiding the 20th anniversary of the first, glorious flourish of People Power. To be sure, she will attend an early morning rite on Feb. 25, where she will meet former president and current gadfly Fidel Ramos, but after that she is scheduled to travel to other parts of the country.

The rationale, as the Palace explains it, sounds solid enough; Edsa I was a nationwide phenomenon, and the President's schedule merely reflects that under-recognized fact. But on second hearing, the President's excuse actually sounds hollow. Surely she can spend even a few minutes on Edsa itself, on the day we celebrate the miracle of People Power.

But that would mean sharing the stage with ex-President Corazon Aquino, who has repeatedly called on her to resign. It would also mean facing a crowd she cannot control. At best, it will be an impassive mass; at worst, she will face a hooting crowd, who will accuse her of betraying the deepest ideals of the Edsa Revolution.



Pasig drug market flourishing for 3 years now

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THE POLICE GUESSED WRONG WHEN THEY said that the drug dens in Pasig that they raided the other day have been there for "less than a year." According to sources, the drug market in the area has been there for more than two years, possibly even three years.

The shabu "restaurants" started more than a year ago, after a fire razed the squatter shanties there; but the selling and use of drugs in the area had been flourishing much earlier. The sources said squatters were allowed to erect shanties inside that 1,000-square-meter lot (not 600 sq m as earlier reported) "provided they sold shabu." (The lot is fenced partly with a wall of hollow blocks and partly with galvanized iron sheets.) This shabu market was pretty well known to residents in the area. So it was impossible that the police and Pasig City officials did not know the drug dens there. In fact, the Eastern Police District headquarters, city hall and police community precinct are a spitting distance from the market site. There is even a police outpost at the entrance to the street going to the drug dens.

"Incomprehensible," PNP Chief Arturo Lomibao said after seeing the 40 or so drug dens inside the compound. "I can't believe this."

Well, he better believe it. And merely reassigning and retraining the Pasig narcotics team and the seven-man contingent of the police community precinct will not be enough sanction. They deserve a harsher punishment. The operators of the drug dens would not have been so bold if they were not enjoying protection or had not established a modus vivendi with the police. The dens were operating openly; tricycle drivers routinely took passengers to or patronize the dens themselves.

The operators were so confident they had a price list of the drugs sold openly displayed. At night, they had agents with flashlights signaling potential customers arriving in cars—proof that the dens were patronized by well-to-do addicts from other places. My sources said some residents had hinted to the police a long time ago (very discreetly, for obvious reasons) the existence of the drug dens, but nothing happened—until the other day.

It is hard to believe that the police were merely caught flatfooted. They could not have been blissfully unaware of the existence of the drug dens that were only a stone's throw away from their precinct. They must have been in the act much deeper.

* * *

Police community precincts are police detachments assigned to communities, complete with offices, a small jail and a contingent of policemen. They are supposed to show the face of the law in the "lucky" communities and eradicate lawlessness in these areas. Alas, it rarely happens that way. Ironically, the presence of the police precinct sometimes promotes lawlessness.

The police community precinct near the drug dens in Pasig is a good example. I remember the police precinct in Balintawak that Chair Bayani Fernando of the Metro Manila Development Authority dismantled because it had become a disgrace.

Then there is the police precinct at the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Tandang Sora (under the flyover) in Quezon City. This corner should be a showcase of law and order because of the presence of this police precinct. But it is not.

Traffic here is terrible. Sidewalk vendors spill into the street. Cell phones are taken from owners right at the street corner. (Once a student was stabbed dead nearby.) And all these can be seen from the door and windows of the police community precinct. There are chairs outside where policemen can often be seen chatting. Often there are police cars and motorcycles parked under the flyover. At certain hours, there are two groups of traffic enforcers here—one from the MMDA (those in blue uniforms), and the other from the city hall (those in yellow shirts). Sometimes, there is a big group of motorcycle cops gathered under the flyover.

There is a steel barricade along Commonwealth to prevent jeepneys from loading and unloading passengers at the street corners. And there are two waiting sheds—one on each side of Commonwealth—for commuters. But traffic is still terrible. Why?

Because nobody pays attention to the traffic signs, to the yellow boxes and pedestrian stripes on the pavement. Nobody pays attention to the traffic enforcers; the enforcers are not interested in orderly traffic anyway. And nobody uses the waiting sheds. Commuters wait for rides in the middle of the street, so jeepneys and buses stop in the middle of the street to pick them up. Even when there are traffic enforcers around, they don't direct the commuters to the waiting sheds. No, they stand in the middle of the street with the commuters and wave at the jeepney drivers.

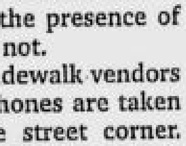
Near the street corners, beside the pedestrian lane, there are big signs: "Strictly No Loading/Unloading. SB" The "SB" stands for Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte. But the mayor is made a laughingstock because jeepneys stop to load and unload passengers right beside the sign, in the middle of the pedestrian lane, and "*barkers*" call for passengers right there. Even the mayor's "Yellow Shirts," when they are there, don't do anything to shoo away the *barkers* or the jeepneys.

Crossing Commonwealth Avenue here is dangerous. Drivers pay no regard to the pedestrian lane or to the pedestrians. Even if there are enforcers there, they do not stop the vehicles to allow passengers to cross. The latter have to run for their lives.

(To be continued)

Teaching

There's the Rub



Conrado de Quiros

THE ALLIANCE OF CONCERNED TEACHERS has a problem with Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo teaching public elementary school kids, or making a show of it. Late last week, the current occupant of Malacañang descended on a public school in Mandaluyong and played teacher to a Grade 1 class for 40 minutes. She encouraged the kids to read more books and speak English better. She gave out lessons in geography as well.

ACT is unimpressed, however. It demands to know: "What values will our schoolchildren learn from a President who faces serious charges of electoral fraud, betrayal of public trust, corruption, and gross human rights violations, and who has used every means, both fair and foul, to thwart efforts to hold her accountable? That it's all right to lie, cheat and steal?"

I myself found it not a little ironic that the current occupant of Malacañang should be giving lessons in reading, language and geography. The first thing one ought to be able to read is the writing on the wall, and that is certainly a lesson GMA cannot give. Not by example. As to language, I will not go into the debate on whether Filipino or English is the better language for national development. I need only say that lying, cheating and stealing do not sound better in English than in Filipino, and vice versa. And as to geography, well, it can't help that the current occupant of Malacañang is a little confused about where she should be geographically. That should not be in Malacañang, that should be in Muntinlupa.

You want to teach, teach by example. That is the most powerful pedagogy or lesson plan there is. That ad which shows parents doing the wrong things—beating a red light, throwing litter around, etc.—and which says, "*Sa mata ng bata, ang mali ay nagiging tama* (In the eyes of kids, the wrong things shown by their parents become right)," has a point. All your exhortations or sermons will mean nothing if you subvert them with your acts. You may not instill discipline in your kid however you press your lessons with belt marks on his ass if he sees you coming home drunk and brawling with the neighbors. You can't teach honesty to your kid however you bawl at him for cheating in exams if he sees you bribing a cop for a traffic violation.

How you act and not how you say is how you teach. What you are and not what you say is what you teach. That is backed up by studies by the way. Jean Piaget did say once that a parent that keeps telling his kid, "No, no, no," to make him behave, will not make him behave. He will only make him rebellious by branding in his brain the word "No."

You want moral or ethical pupils, you need moral and ethical teachers. You want a moral or ethical people, you need a moral and ethical leader. By moral or ethical, I do not mean private virtues, or the ones that have to do with abstemiousness, saintliness or puritanical conduct. I mean public virtues, the ones that have to do with integrity, fairness, a sense of right and wrong. I do not particularly mind that a leader is a lecher, a drunk and a glutton. I do mind that he (or she) is a crook, a cheat and a tyrant. Quite unlike Jaime Cardinal Sin, I did not mind that Erap had many mistresses who added to his comforts. Quite like most Filipinos, I did mind that he had many cronies who subtracted from our coffers. I do not particularly mind if Pidal has one Toh many partners in love, I do mind that he has one too many partners in crime.

That is the reason I cannot abide the current situation where we have a current occupant of Malacañang who is terribly confused about her geography. That is a horrendous lesson that is being imparted not just inside the classroom but outside of it—or in the bigger classroom that is the nation. It is a miserable lesson that is being sown not just in the minds of students but in the minds of all the citizens of the country. That is the one lesson that is spawning other lessons in cynicism and distrust. That is the one deadweight that is dragging the country down the path of ruin.

I've always thought that the most powerful part of Susan Roces' speech at Club Filipino last year was not when she said she looked into GMA's eyes when GMA said sorry to the people and found no contrition there. It was not when she said in a thunderous voice, "*Arogante ka!*" It was when she said that she looked at the eyes of her grandchildren and was driven to overcome her natural disinclination to engage in politics and damn the iniquity that was wrought upon her husband. Because if she did not, she said, what kind of lessons will we bequeath to our children? Because if she did not, she said, what kind of world will we bequeath to our children?

That is the real question to ask today. Particularly for those who insist on forgiving and forgetting and blithely moving on. What kind of world are we leaving the children? What kind of values and attitudes, beliefs and convictions, are we imparting to them? That it's all right to ignore injustice and oppression, that we can somehow attain progress even while they riot? That it's all right to live a lie, it can still be a foundation for peace and progress however tenuous? Well, we can sing the "Pambansang Awit" to our hearts' content—at least those who know it; I doubt most members of Congress do—and be particularly ardent when we come to the part about "*Sa manlulupig, di ka pasisiil* (To the oppressor you will not bow down)," but I don't see how the kids can take any cue from us. The oppressor is not always a foreign invader against whom we are willing to defend *lupang hinirang* to the death, it can always be a local invader whom we are willing to tolerate to death.

As you do, so you teach.

Jointly or separately

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

I AM GLAD THAT FORMER JUSTICE ISAGANI Cruz, a respected constitutionalist, is contributing to the effort to shed light on the ambiguities of the constitutional provision on Charter change. The main question raised by the constitutional text is whether the two houses of Congress should vote jointly or separately.

The text is silent about that. It simply says: "Any amendment or revision of this Constitution may be proposed by the Congress, upon a vote of three-fourths of all its members ...."

Indeed, there are provisions specific as to when the two houses shall vote separately: when breaking a tie between two presidential candidates (VII, 4), when confirming the president's nomination of a vice president to fill a vacancy (VII, 9), when declaring a president incapacitated (VII, 10), and when Congress declares the existence of a state of war (VI, 23). From these it might be concluded, as Justice Cruz suggests, that when the Constitution requires the two chambers to vote separately, it so states unequivocally.

There is, however, also a provision which requires Congress to vote jointly—that is, when Congress wants to revoke a declaration of martial law or a suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus (VII, 18). From this, it may, with equal logic, be also concluded that when the Constitution allows the two chambers to vote jointly, it so indicates unequivocally. One might also add that voting jointly is so unique for a bicameral body that it is allowed only in one specific instance.

My take on these two separate and opposite conclusions is that the solution to the textual ambiguity cannot be found in any of the separate provisions of the Constitution. The provisions do not illumine but only heighten the ambiguity. Thus, we are forced to look for clarification and help elsewhere.

Are there other aids to constitutional construction when faced with textual ambiguity? There are. I suggest that we explore these aids. We have to approach this problem the way we approach some of the key provisions of the Constitution, which are couched in grand ambiguities. Often there is no single interpretation. For this reason, there is necessarily a certain fluidity in the approaches to a constitutional problem. And the final conclusion may depend on the modality of interpretation that is chosen. Briefly, what are the possible approaches?

One approach used in dealing with an unclear text is **historical**. It involves an analysis of the intention of the framers of the Constitution and the circumstances of its ratification.

Another person might follow a **structural** approach. This involves drawing inferences from the architecture of the power relationships in the constitutional arrangement. Structure is what the text shows but does not say. An easy example is "separation of powers." The text does not say it, but the actual distribution of powers to three departments shows it.

And, of course, there is the **doctrinal** approach which simply follows earlier judicial decisions. This is the doctrine of *stare decisis*.

Still another is the **ethical** approach, which seeks to interpret the Filipino "ideals and aspirations" that are embedded in the constitutional document.

Finally, one might use the **prudential** approach by weighing and comparing the costs and benefits that might be found in conflicting rules.

I suggest that a combination of the **historical** and **structural** approaches will be helpful.

Historically, the current provision on amendments and revision was approved on July 7 and 8, 1986. The prevailing mood then among the members of the Constitutional Commission looked like a preference for a unicameral legislative body. In fact, the draft at hand provided for unicameralism. Much later, on July 21, 1986, after much debate, the Constitutional Commission, by a very close vote of 21-20, decided to go bicameral. The commission, concerned with other issues, did not look back. Now we are left with the necessity of trying to construe the meaning of a constitutional provision originally designed for a unicameral legislature but now to be used by a bicameral legislature.

How should a bicameral Congress use it? Congress should use it the way bicameral Congresses are expected to act. How? The bicameral **structure** points to the answer.

When we look at the reasons why the framers of the Constitution went bicameral, we easily see that the arguments for bicameralism were the traditional ones which say that (1) an upper house is a body that looks at problems from the national perspective and thus serves as a check on the parochial tendency of a body elected by districts, (2) bicameralism allows for a more careful study of legislation, and (3) bicameralism is less vulnerable to attempts of the executive to control the legislature.

I would focus on the second and third arguments. First, bicameralism allows for a more careful study of legislation. Simply put, two heads can be better than one. And since the Constitution is the supreme law of the land, any change done through a bicameral body must be accomplished through the most thorough decision-making process, namely a two-step process.

Second, bicameralism is less vulnerable to executive pressure. In the current context, it is obvious that the President is pushing her own agenda. Her agenda needs purification.

Am I therefore saying that a unicameral body is incapable of a thorough study? I am not saying that. What I am suggesting is that, in a unicameral legislature, the best and the brightest are concentrated in one body, whereas in a bicameral body there is no concentration of the best and the brightest in one chamber. Is that not obvious today?

Illusions

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

CERES DOYO SAID IT IN THIS SPACE, AND I'M glad she did, for I will say it again. The problem with the Ultra stampede was not poor crowd control, police supervision, or contingency plans. I am afraid the investigating authorities are missing the forest for the trees.

But so too does ABS-CBN. When the disaster struck, the television network was submissive to any investigation. But they have switched to the defensive mode since then. It would not be surprising if ABS-CBN turns recalcitrant in the next few days. Whether the network management and "Wowowee" organizers like it or not, the invitation that brought 30,000 people to jampack Ultra came from no one else but the television network. Let me say that again for it is a singularly important point: there was an invitation from ABS-CBN.

Let us cut the hogwash about "giving hope to the poor," as Willy Revillame, like a broken record, repeats and repeats. "Wowowee" is about the "war of the networks." Wasn't it trailing in the ratings behind its rival noontime show, "Eat Bulaga"? Didn't it entice 30,000 people to attend an anniversary show just to give itself a semblance of being more popular than its competition? Above all, wasn't it foolhardy for "Wowowee" and ABS-CBN to do that when it knew all along that their chosen venue was capable of accommodating only 18,000 people?

Willie's so-called "hope" should never be taken for real. "Wowowee" was never about hope. It was all about illusion. When you capitalize on the people's poverty and you lure the poor with the dream of winning prizes that you know, pretty well, not all in the crowd of 30,000 can win, that is, plain and simple, creating illusions.

Illusions do not provide the poor with dignity. Rather, illusions exploit them. To begin with, the show was never for them. In that show, they were simply used as props to jack up ratings in a war of profit, meant to fill only the coffers of television networks. As Doyo put it, "Wowowee" Pied Pipered its fans into the disaster that it turned out to be.

The language of illusion is something that is all too familiar to us. For that is how government treats the poor. In this country, government has come up with no real solutions to liberate the poor from their poverty. Whenever it goes beyond lip service, all it does is to sandpaper the face of poverty without going into the heart of the problem. What government does, ratings-hungry television networks are also doing. The government feeds the poor with illusions to win "*pogi* points"; the networks mesmerize the poor with illusions of winning in the ratings war. Both are actually playing the same game. Like government, networks are never the wellspring of good social values.

Dodging the mendicancy issue, Tina Monzon-Palma was quick to defend her network (but of course). "'Wowowee' also gives to NGOs." Yes, exactly the same way government does. What is desolating is the misuse of TV's potential to instruct and educate. The effects of media on the social world—anthropologists and sociologists call it "mediatization"—cannot be underestimated.

I would like to believe, for instance, that most students' inability to speak fluent English—a common complaint of educators—is the result of "Manila-centric" media's silly use of Taglish. Television media in this country has never been multicultural in the first place. To this day, TV shows poke fun at the color of Whitney Tyson's skin, or the supposedly unattractive facial features of Diego. On the other hand, talk show hosts chatter as though their personal views are morally infallible. That is aside from the fact that for many of them, their English would probably be a source of mis-education. The news, which used to be a source of information for public service, has been conscripted into the network wars by stressing only the sensational, often including the silly lives of show-biz stars who are far from being the epitomes of social behavior.

A week after the tragedy, I still have to see a sign of contrition from ABS-CBN. Dong Puno's talk show last week, for instance, stuck to being self-serving. Evading questions on the issue of mendicancy and on the ratings war, Puno focused instead on the culpabilities of the police and the Pasig City government. It certainly didn't help that some of his guests such as Sen. Alfredo Lim heaped praises on the network—not surprisingly, of course, as he was in their territory. Oh well, politicians. I would have hoped that the acerbic Harry Roque would train his guns on the network. But no, he was unusually polite, buttressing his opinion with his rabid obsession of the Gloria-Garci controversy by saying that, unlike in anti-Gloria rallies, there were no police to attend to the thousands of the "Wowowee" fans massed outside Ultra. Days after, his contention fell apart: there were in fact more than 400 policemen who had been deployed to Ultra in connection with the "Wowowee" first anniversary show. Expectedly, the comments of two other guests were obviously not given weight. Jesuit Fr. Ted Gonzales spoke on the need for media to instill the value of hard work over an easy life of gambling and prizes. The television veteran Pepe Pimentel, on the other hand, game show host of the defunct "Kwarta o Kahon," pointed to "Wowowee's" procedural flaws in drawing winners. But their opinions did not seem to matter to the host. I'm afraid that ABS-CBN is beginning to think of itself as infallible.

Television networks are now at a crossroads: to propagate good values or promote reliance on luck. Should it be a choice?

* * *

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

Obnoxious reality

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

YESTERDAY'S HEADLINES SAID THE PALACE blinked. How so? Supposedly because Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Joaquin Lagonera verbally assured Sen. Richard Gordon that come Monday (today), officials from the executive department will go back to testifying in the budget hearings of the Senate.

In reality, however, the Palace did not blink; it won a point. And it emphasized—not just maintained and reasserted—its position on Executive Order No. 464, which requires any and all officials within the ambit of the executive department to secure permission from the President before appearing before Congress. In other words, the officials appearing before the Senate do so on the sufferance of the President, and certainly not because of a Senate's summons issued pursuant to its right to hear testimony from them.

Partisans, not only of the President but also of what can only be called "parliamentarism with Lakas-CMD characteristics"—that is, a one-party dictatorship disguised as Charter change—portray the senators as interested only in keeping their jobs, while studiously ignoring the principle of checks and balances that is the cornerstone of a genuine republican government. These partisans, engaged in an insurgency whose aim is to eliminate the Senate, go as far as to heap contempt on the Senate, painting it as an office composed of individuals with meaningless mandates. Having been elected at large—that is, by a national electorate—the senators, these partisans say, are in reality answerable to no one, especially so since their constituencies are so vast. But then, based on the same logic, the same can be said of the President of the Philippines: she is answerable to no one. This is an inconvenient point to raise, because it is precisely what is taking place right now—though the lingering doubts about her legitimacy actually indicate a worse state of affairs: not having been elected by everyone, she insists on being accountable to no one, neither to the public nor to her party.

Therefore, even if one buys the seductive but silly reasoning of the enemies of the Senate, the fight between the President and the Senate boils down to this: a President with a doubtful mandate versus a Senate whose members have the same constituency (the national electorate) as she does, but with a more iron-clad mandate than she possesses. Furthermore, senators belong to an institution designed precisely to temper the bootlicking tendencies of the House of Representatives, and the desire of weak presidents to dominate institutions that get in their way. I say weak presidents because strong presidents know how to get the cooperation of Congress without attempting to institutionalize a dictatorship.

It is in the nature of chief executives to try to corral all power and authority for themselves, just as it is in the nature of legislators to reduce everything to haggling over the terms of surrender. That is why it is exceedingly dangerous and unhealthy to put together both the executive and legislative functions in the hands of a single person or entity. And while those with a fetish for efficiency would prefer a totalitarian government, it is still in the interest of democracy to sacrifice efficiency for a built-in mechanism that will prevent one institution from dominating all others.

In 1948-49, President Elpidio Quirino, frustrated with Congress' uncooperative attitude toward him, seized upon the theory that emergency powers granted to the President of the Philippines on the eve of World War II, were still his to use, though the war had ended in 1945. Whenever Congress passed a law not to his liking, he would veto the law and issue an executive order precisely on the same subject. When Congress refused to pass a budget, he issued an EO that served as the General Appropriations Act. Ultimately, the issue became intertwined with the preparations for the 1949 presidential elections, and for the first time, an attempt to impeach a president was made (it failed). The Supreme Court stepped in (twice!) and ruled that Quirino could not exercise emergency powers as the period of emergency had quite clearly come to an end. The intervention of the Supreme Court was part of the constitutional mechanism of checks and balances.

Unlike the Supreme Court of the past—which ruled in the Quirino-era Emergency Powers cases that the "transcendental importance to the public of these cases demands that they be settled promptly and definitely, brushing aside, if we must, technicalities of procedure"—today's Supreme Court is certainly taking its time, despite having been freed from the shackles of what used to be called "political" cases that are thus beyond its jurisdiction. The present Constitution gives the Supreme Court the authority to address issues involving grave abuse of discretion. The assertion by the President of the Philippines on the writ of her authority (extending as far as to impede the functions of Congress) surely presents grounds for judicial intervention. While the Supreme Court has set oral arguments on EO 464 for the end of this month, it doesn't mean the case questioning the order will be resolved soon.

Which means an obnoxious state of affairs—in which the President has effectively clipped Congress' power of the purse by engineering the reenactment of last year's budget—continues. Does this mean the Supreme Court is doing a Pontius Pilate, neither striking down the President's order nor addressing an unhappy state of affairs? You be the judge.

From doles to incentives

COMMENTARY

Joel Pagsanghan

ALMOST EVERY TIME MY CAR STOPS AT A TRAFFIC LIGHT, an impoverished child taps on my window begging for alms. Most of the time I do not give, because I don't want to encourage more begging. I know of others who don't give as well because they are afraid that the money will just be spent on vices or go to a syndicate. As soon as I drive on though, I always feel guilty and tell myself, "This is why you chose social development as a career."

My social development career has led me to examine ways to help our public school system. Some say that a "mendicant mentality" has also taken over many of our public schools.

Foundations, NGOs and the private sector, in general, have been extending generous financial and material support to public education over the past few years. In fact, many NGO networks, such as the League of Corporate Foundations, have made public education a priority concern. Private giving to the Department of Education's Adopt-a-School program doubled from P600 million in 2003 to P1.2 billion in 2004.

While public education is still under-funded, the educational system's performance does not encourage people to give more. For one, students don't seem to be learning. In the 2004 High School Readiness Test (HSRT), less than one percent of first year high school students managed to score 75 percent or better in English, Science and Math. In the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, Filipinos placed 41st and 42nd in Math and Science exams taken by high school students in 45 countries.

Moreover, many foundations involved at the field level have accounts of items donated to schools that are not being used. During my own fieldwork in the Visayas, I personally saw a donor taking back three out of seven sewing machines he donated because these were not being used. In another instance, donated books in a new library lay untouched by the students because the school had no item for a librarian.

The public schools are not entirely to blame for such situations. After all, if someone offers you something of value for nothing in exchange, wouldn't you take it, then be on your way? This is simple human nature.

Thus, the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP) is currently pioneering a strategy of "Performance-Based Support" to public schools. The strategy consists of two parts: a simple and participatory school-community planning process; and a resource mobilization strategy contingent on the school-community plan.

The school-community planning process involves only three steps—certification of interest by the school head, the formation of a small working group of stakeholders (including groups such as the Parent Teacher Community Association), and a community meeting where a school-community strategic education plan is drafted.

Through this process, the community becomes aware of and accountable for the learning process of its own children. The FWWPP has developed templates for each of the three steps.

This approach reinforces the Governance of Basic Education Act (RA 9155) and the DepEd's "Schools First Initiative" by promoting community management of schools and school empowerment. It is also a simplified version of a basic approach already being applied by community organizers in various NGOs.

The resource mobilization strategy basically involves the "stockpiling" of material and financial donations, which are then used to support items in the strategic plans of the schools. The key is to move away from freebies, toward "strategic giving" that is intended to help schools catch up on their performance benchmarks. We must transform private-sector support from doles to incentives.

Some may say that working at the school level is tedious and there are too many schools (41,000 public schools nationwide). Unfortunately, working at the school level may be the only way to generate genuine grass-roots participation, empowerment and "stakeholdership."

Moreover, the three-step community planning strategy was designed to be simple, such that one community organizer can cover several schools.

It is also a process that schools, given the needed skills and incentives, could ultimately implement on their own. We are aware that numerous foundations and NGOs are already working with schools all over the country. The adoption of this simple strategy may help make their programs more results-oriented.

For a concern as huge and as stubborn as public education, more aggressive strategies may be needed.

If a large number of foundations and NGOs shift to performance-based giving, then maybe we can help accelerate the literacy and achievement levels of our nation's children. Maybe doles won't be necessary.

Maybe someday, when my car stops at a stoplight, there will be no more children begging for alms. Then my conscience will be clear.

Joel Pagsanghan is the FWWPP's consultant for social development. He was formerly the national coordinator of the Caucus of Development NGO Networks. He has MA degrees from the Asian Institute of Management and the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance.

THEY SAID

Love's purpose

"Love is free; it is not practiced as a way of achieving other ends."
—*Pope Benedict XVI*

Feared

"Do you need proof of how notorious this man is? Even the Abu Sayyaf is scared of him."
—*Chief Supt. Pedro Tango on the request of imprisoned Abu Sayyaf suspects not to be put in the same cell as renegade cop Rizal Alih who, in 1989, led the takeover of a Philippine Constabulary Camp where he killed two military officials, including Brig. Gen. Eduardo Batalla*

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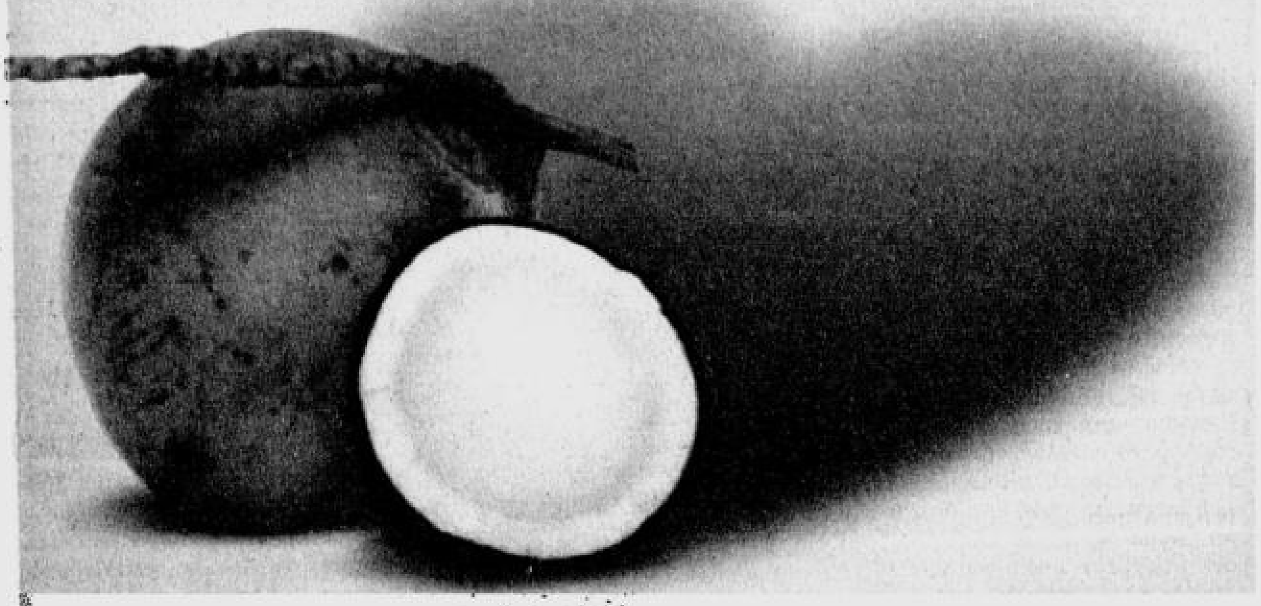

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Consumers pay VAT on pilfered electricity

LETTERS

MERALCO, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE Energy Regulatory Commission, is imposing VAT on cost items not directly related to electricity service such as: System Loss (7.60 percent as of January billing period); Power Act Reduction (6.94 percent); and Distribution and Subsidies (10 percent).

Embedded in the Distribution and Subsidies is the VAT on Lifeline Rate Subsidy, Interclass Subsidy, Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment and Local Franchise Tax. It is already unreasonable that the consumers absorb, at a rate of 0.57 percent, the franchise which grants Meralco the right to conduct business in the country. Even so, the ERC (government) proceeds to impose, through Meralco, a VAT on that franchise tax. ERC Resolution 20 of 2005 states: "The imposition of the VAT replaces the payment of the National Franchise Tax"; thus, it effectively absolves Meralco from further paying the franchise, and completely places this responsibility on the shoulders of the consumers.

Aside from being made to pay the franchise tax and a VAT thereon, consumers are charged for Meralco's technical and administrative inefficiency (System Loss) and additional VAT thereon.

Not content with condoning the Meralco practice of making honest customers pay for others' pilferage, the government is taxing "forced generosity." Customers "donate" 11.25 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to the Lifeline Rate Subsidy—purportedly, this enables Meralco to give 20- to 50-percent discounts to poorer customers, but without losing any money while gaining a semblance of corporate responsibility. Vis-à-vis the tax-deductible donations enjoyed by rich people and corporations, the VAT on this kind of forced donation from ordinary electricity consumers becomes one more example of the impropriety, if not the injustice, of such imposition.

Meanwhile, the Cera as an automatic cost-recovery mechanism—which insulates electric utilities from added business costs brought about by peso depreciation—is promptly passed on to Meralco's consumers at a rate of 11.87 percent of the Distribution Charge. Why should the Arroyo government further impose a 10-percent VAT on the Cera charge?

Residential consumers enjoy a discount called Inter-Class Subsidy and this is 21.39 centavos per kWh, an amount Meralco recovers from its commercial and industrial customers. Residential consumers also enjoy a Power Act Reduction discount of 11.40 centavos per kWh, a loss which Napocor absorbs. But for reasons only known to the ERC, Meralco has also been allowed to impose a VAT on the Inter-Class Subsidy and the Power Act Reduction.

The VAT on these cost items in our Meralco bills underscores the inappropriateness and economic injustice of imposing VAT on electricity and the people.

—REP. JOEL G. VIRADOR,
Bayan Muna Party List,
South Wing, Room 617,
House of Representatives,
Batasan, Quezon City

Only one truth for every proposition

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE LETTER OF Jaime de Vera (PDI, 1/27/06) who said: "Nobody quarrels with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in seeking the whole truth about cheating in the 2004 presidential election. But the question is, whose truth are we searching: the opposition's truth, the administration's truth, the CBCP's—119 bishops'—truth, or the truth that is the product of extensive judicial process under our laws and Constitution?"

I cannot understand what he means by "whose truth." This to me smacks of moral relativism. On any given subject, isn't there only one truth? There may be certain aspects or parts of the whole truth. But there can only be one truth.

In the matter of who truly won the last presidential election, isn't there only one truth—Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo either truly won or not. On the matter of her alleged cheating, isn't there only one truth—she either cheated or not. Whether there was massive cheating and to what extent is another matter altogether.

There are doubtless many issues related to the matters cited above, but for every proposition or question, there is only one truth. There may be many opinions, but there is only one truth.

I find it ironic that someone whose last name is the root word of "veracity" would propose the inane concept of different truths.

—TOMAS TINIO,
tomastinio@yahoo.com

Fixed term for education secretary?

THIS IS IN REACTION TO EDUCATION Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz's commentary titled "Politics in education." (PDI, 1/23/06) I agree that the Department of Education can function and perform better without having as its head somebody from Congress. Fe Hidalgo, the present officer in charge, is very capable and experienced enough to keep the department on the right track. She is the most logical choice as education secretary.

As for the politicians aspiring for the position of education secretary, I don't think they can come up with innovations. Neither will they be able to successfully lead the DepEd into providing quality education, as mandated by the Constitution. Having been elected to Congress, they ought to serve their constituents as such. Besides, they have no experience as classroom teachers. They have not been members of the academe to really understand the problems and needs of our educational system. Only people who have sweated inside dilapidated classrooms are in the best position to find the best solutions to our educational woes.

Free the position of education secretary from politics. Professionalize the position. Fix the term of the secretary like those heading the Commission on Audit, Commission on Elections and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, if we are really sincere in improving the quality of education in our country.

Again, I want to commend Luz for his commentary. I salute him and I urge him to keep up the good work, unselfish dedication in improving not only the DepEd but also the whole educational system in our country. We need more men like him.

—FELICIDA D. ZAPANTA,
head teacher, Mathematics Department,
Jose P. Laurel Sr. High School,
Project 4, Quezon City

STL to front for 'jueteng' and kill lotto

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS ITEM "GOVERNment to launch 'jueteng' substitute." (PDI, 1/30/06)

The report stated that despite its failure to take off and replace *jueteng* in the late 1980s, the Small Town Lottery (STL) will be relaunched as the "best legal substitute for the illegal numbers game." Well and good, since it was already approved by the board of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

However, there must have been valid and good reasons for junking the STL in the late 1980s. Why then resurrect it now?

At present, the lotto operation is earning billions of pesos for the government. The revival of the STL should have been subjected to an honest-to-goodness "public hearing"—to review and reassess if at present there are compelling legal and justifiable grounds to reverse the decision to junk the STL. The STL should not be revived on the recommendation of one or two persons, who might have hidden agendas. After all, the STL failed to stamp out *jueteng*—unlike lotto which, at least, has contained, if not successfully eradicated, *jueteng*.

The revival of the STL will deal a death blow to lotto, which is legal. Surely, *jueteng* will happily piggyback on the STL again.

Most importantly, in the new STL guidelines now being finalized, to get a franchise for STL operations, one—whether a local government unit or a private entity—would need millions of pesos. This means the gambling lord, who has the money, could make "dummies" of the franchisees.

We should learn from our past mistakes.

—WENIFREDO A. ARMENTA,
Lopez, Quezon

Cooperation, not confiscation in Makati

LAST JAN. 27, I WAS DRIVING IN MAKATI CITY looking for a building where I was to deliver documents to a friend. Because I had not been in the place for some time, I got lost. Confused, I was stopped by Mobile Car No. 118 of the Makati City Traffic Management Group for a traffic violation.

After explaining to them my presence in the place and how I got entangled in the traffic violation, the mobile car's crew, instead of confiscating my license, escorted me to the place I was looking for. They even provided me a free parking space for my car. The two traffic enforcers in that mobile car introduced themselves to me as Nelson and De Lima.

To show my appreciation for their kindness, I offered to gift them with cash. But to my surprise, they refused my offer and told me: "Sir, policy *po ni* Mayor Binay, service-oriented *daw trabaho namin, hindi manghuli nang manghuli. Kailangan daw po* cooperation *hindi* confiscation."

I have not met Mayor Jejomar Binay in person, though I had earlier filed graft cases against him for other reasons. But there I was, the beneficiary of his sound public service policy.

Kudos to you Mayor Binay and to the two traffic officers!

—LIGORIO G.M. NAVAL,
114-B Alima,
Bacoor, Cavite

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

M LHUILLIER

CASH PABUENAS

First Monthly Raffle Draw Winners of P2,000.00 each February 3, 2006

GRAND PRIZE:
FOUR (4) winners of
₱250,000.00 each

MONTHLY DRAWS:
73 winners of P2,000 each

PROMO PERIOD:
December 22, 2005 to
March 21, 2006

DRAW DATES:
February 3, 2006
March 3, 2006
April 3, 2006

AREAS	NAMES OF WINNERS & ADDRESS
	NCR / LUZON
NCR Central A	ALIBASER MACASAGUN, H 118 Traveler Inn, 648 C. Palanca St., Quiapo
NCR Central B	BERUALDO GABONADA, 26B JP Rizal Tagato, Manila
NCR Rizal A	ESTELA ROSQUITES, B6 L5 Harristown St., corner Brook Vile Drive, CH Cainta Rizal
NCR Rizal B	ANACLETA N. PINCA, #13 Retalco Drive, Bagong Ilog, Pasig City
NCR Cavite A	ELIZABETH PABROQUEZ, Brgy. Luciano, TMC, Cavite
NCR Cavite B	ROSE L. DOMINGO, 86-629 Mabuhay St., Las Piñas City
NCR Cavite C	CHARLIE CAHILLO, 622-9 De Febrero St., Mand. City
Southern Luzon A	ROMEO MAG-USARA, Primewood Coast & Maktg., San Pedro, Laguna
Southern Luzon B	ERIBERTO C. TABING, 134 Sabang, Dasmariñas, Cavite
Southern Luzon C	MARIA N. GALOPE, By-Pass, San Vicente Rd-2, Silang, Cavite
S/E Luzon A	RHEA JARDELEZA, Matoas Na Bayan, Magpay, Marinduque
S/E Luzon B	CLEMENTE S. CAMANGEG JR., 170 Don Bosco St., Mayapa, Calamba
S/W Luzon A	LYN S. CABRERA, 7285 De Joya St., De Joya Bayview Subd., Batangas City
S/W Luzon B	LUCY DE LUNA, 94 Malaya Rosario Batangas
S/W Luzon C	EDUARDO C. RAFANAN JR., Sto. Niño, Malibog, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro
Bicol A	EDNA A. ARMERO, Pawa, Purok 1, Legaspi City
Bicol B	ANTHONY M. DERIS, Alpeler St., Del Rosario BAAO, Cam. Sur
Bicol C	MARISSA BORROMEO, 165 Tamayo St., Dimasalang, Masbate
Central Luzon A	ANITA D. GAJUNERA, 1393 B Jesus St. corner Herberta Sta. Trinidad, Angeles City
Central Luzon B	LILIBETH RAMOS, 35 Tumana Sta. Maria Bulacan
Central Luzon C	DIVINO N. MALATE, Del Rosario City, San Fernando, Pampanga
Northern Luzon A	ROLAND P. LASACA, Centro West Sta. Teresita, Cagayan
Northern Luzon B	ELSA S. SANTELLA, Bonifacio Cabugao, Ilocos Sur
N/W Luzon A	HELEN M. DALMACIO, Bitong, Galimuyod, Ilocos Sur
N/W Luzon B	MARILYN SUMEOG, 219 San Jose, Urdaneta City
N/W Luzon C	ARNEL M. SORIANO, Lawak, Amungan, Iba, Zambales
N/E Luzon A	NELSON L. DELA CRUZ, Mapalad, Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija
N/E Luzon B	CHARINA A. MANZANO, Dagupan, Alicia, Isabela
N/E Luzon C	LILY B. PALLINGAYON, 103 Balautan St., Linao East, Tuguegarao, Cagayan
Palawan	ARTHUR HEREDERO, Brgy. San Pedro, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan
	VISAYAS-MINDANAO
Cebu South A	JOSE M. DELOS SANTOS, Poblacion Alcoy Cebu
Cebu South B	NICANOR PONGASE, Guimbanan Pinamungajan
Cebu South C	JOSELITO MONTEROLA, Hi-way Tagunol, Basak, Pardo CC
Cebu Central A	MICHAEL MASARIO, Juan Luna St., Dike Bais City, Neg. Or
Cebu Central B	ANASTACIO FRANCIS SR., c/o Solid Construction Cebu Inc, Tango Bldg., Queen Road CC
Cebu Central C	TITO A. DUMDUM, Buanoy Balamban Cebu
Cebu North A	MARY CHRISTINA V. CASTRO, Blk 7 Quarry Road, Sawaga, Lapu-Lapu City
Cebu North B	JUANITA SABERON, 784 Cabancalan Mandaue
Cebu North C	RUBI ROSA C. OPALLA, Cansaga Consolacion Cebu
Cebu North D	ZENAIDA NATINGA, Calumboyan Sogod Cebu
Bohol	JOSE BUSBUSO JR., R-side Zongkuan Dewis Bohol
Negros Oriental/Siquijor	GENALIN DAANTON, 1399 Helvetia Heights, Bacolod City
Negros Occidental A	NOEL LAURENTE, Cadiz City
Negros Occidental B	REGGIE D. GUIOBOS, Tabao Valladolid, Neg. Occ
Negros Occidental C	CLEMEN YORAC, G-23 Andalucia St. Bacolod City
Panay / Romblon A	REGINA BUELAS, Brgy. Bosenagon Estacia Iloilo
Panay / Romblon B	MARICEL SUSTITUYA, Railway St. Sta. Barbara Iloilo
Panay / Romblon C	LOUELLA G. JOR, 03 Mirasol St., Mandurriao Iloilo City
Panay / Romblon D	LORRELIE DELA CRUZ, Sumakwel St, Iloilo
Panay / Romblon E	JOE MARIE T. ESPINO, Zulueta Miagao
Leyte / Samar A	SOLEMNIZA GERMAN, Tambulid Ormoc City
Leyte / Samar B	MARY JANE A. VILLASENSIO, 53 Mabini St, Ormoc City
Leyte / Samar C	MAY D. OFIAZA, Anas Agpangi Naval Biliran
Leyte / Samar D	EDGARDO A. AYENTO, Parmes Res. Apo St, Cogon Ormoc City
Ozamis / Pagadian A	FRANCISCO FONTANAR, Tinago Ozamis City
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7 dead in S. Leyte mudslide

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

MAASIN, SOUTHERN LEYTE—SEVEN CONSTRUCTION workers were killed yesterday morning when they were swept by a mudslide while resting inside a bunkhouse in Barangay Kahupian, Sogod town in Southern Leyte.

The seven had just finished inspecting a road where a landslide had occurred in Sitio Agas-agas, Kahupian at about 10 a.m. when they decided to rest inside the bunkhouse, just a few meters away.

It proved to be a fatal mistake. Mounds of loose earth cascading from the mountains hit the bunkhouse and swept the workers about 150 feet below.

Board member Eva Tomol, who convened the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council, said that based on the report submitted by Sogod Mayor Sheffered Tan to the PDCC, only one of the seven fatalities had been recovered.

The report identified the worker as Roberto Abonita, 42.

The other fatalities were identified as Vicente Fernandez, 63; Rogelio Sarco, 30; Fernando Sarco, 35; Anita Sarco, 35; Nestor Samalca, 30; and Anecito Mibulos, 42.

Tan said they pre-

7 DEAD/ A18I8

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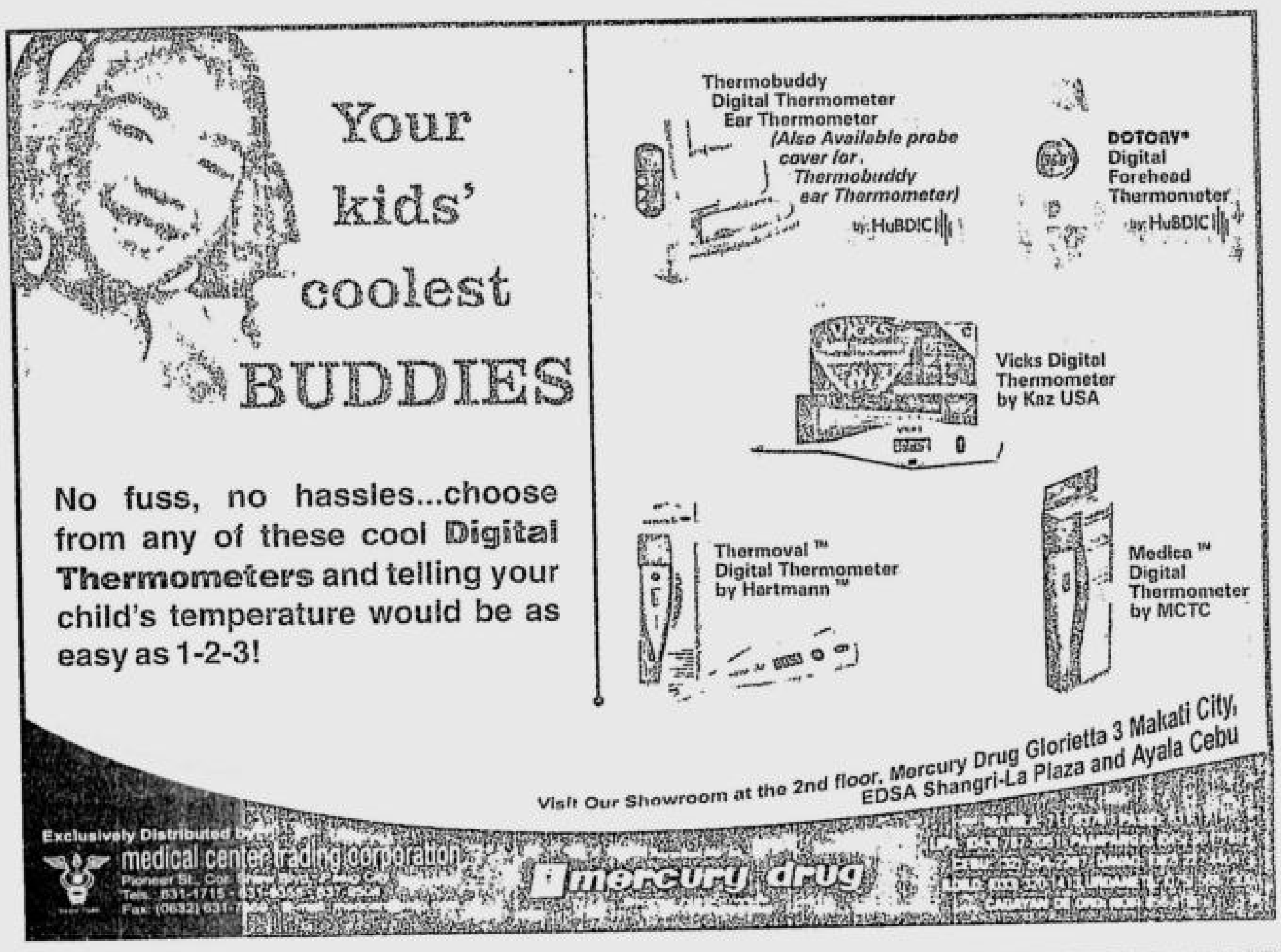
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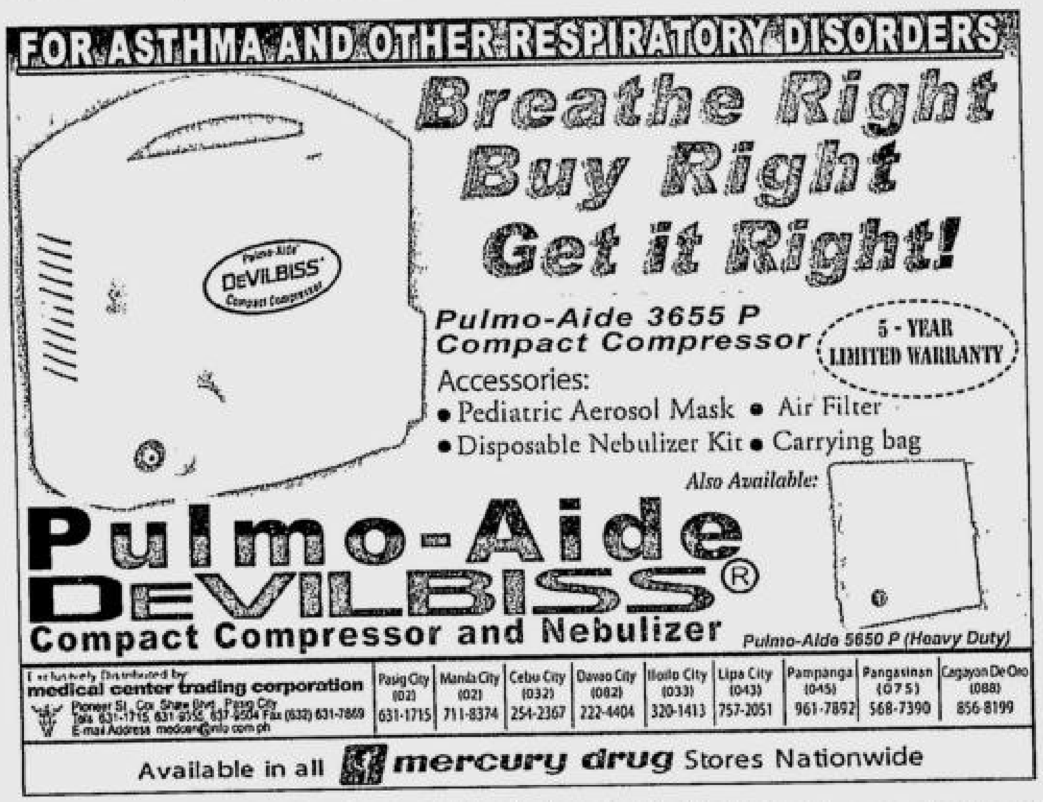
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BUREAU OF PRODUCT STANDARDS
Department of Trade and Industry
Republic of the Philippines

DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. _01_: Series of 2006

Subject: Mandatory Philippine National Standards for Portland Cement

1. In accordance with the provisions of R.A. No. 4109, R.A. No. 7394, Executive Order No. 913, Series of 1983, DAO No. 02, Series of 2002, DAO No. 1, Series of 1997, DAO No. 5, Series of 2001, and Sec 10 (4), Title X, Book IV, of the Administrative Code of 1987, the following Philippine National Standard is hereby adopted for mandatory implementation:

   PNS 07:2005 Portland Cement - Specification

2. All manufacturers, distributors, importers and retailers of said product shall comply with the requirements of this standard.

3. A third party certification, known as the Product Certification Scheme of the DTI - Bureau or Product Standards (BPS), requires all manufacturers and importers of said product to secure a Philippine Standard (PS) License and an Import Commodity Clearance (ICC), respectively, prior to its distribution and sale

4. The DTI-BPS shall promulgate implementing guidelines specifying implementing timetables, taking into consideration present inventory levels, production capabilities of industries, and testing capabilities of BPS and other testing institutions.

5. The implementation of these standard shall be done in proper coordination with the DTI Regional and Provincial Offices and the DTI - Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection (DTI-BTRCP).

6. All manufacturers, distributors, importers and retailers found not complying with those requirements shall be penalized in accordance with the provision for liabilities and penalties under R. A. No. 7394, EO 913, and DAO 02:2002.

7. All other orders or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Administrative Order are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

8. This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in two newspapers of general circulation or in the Official Gazette

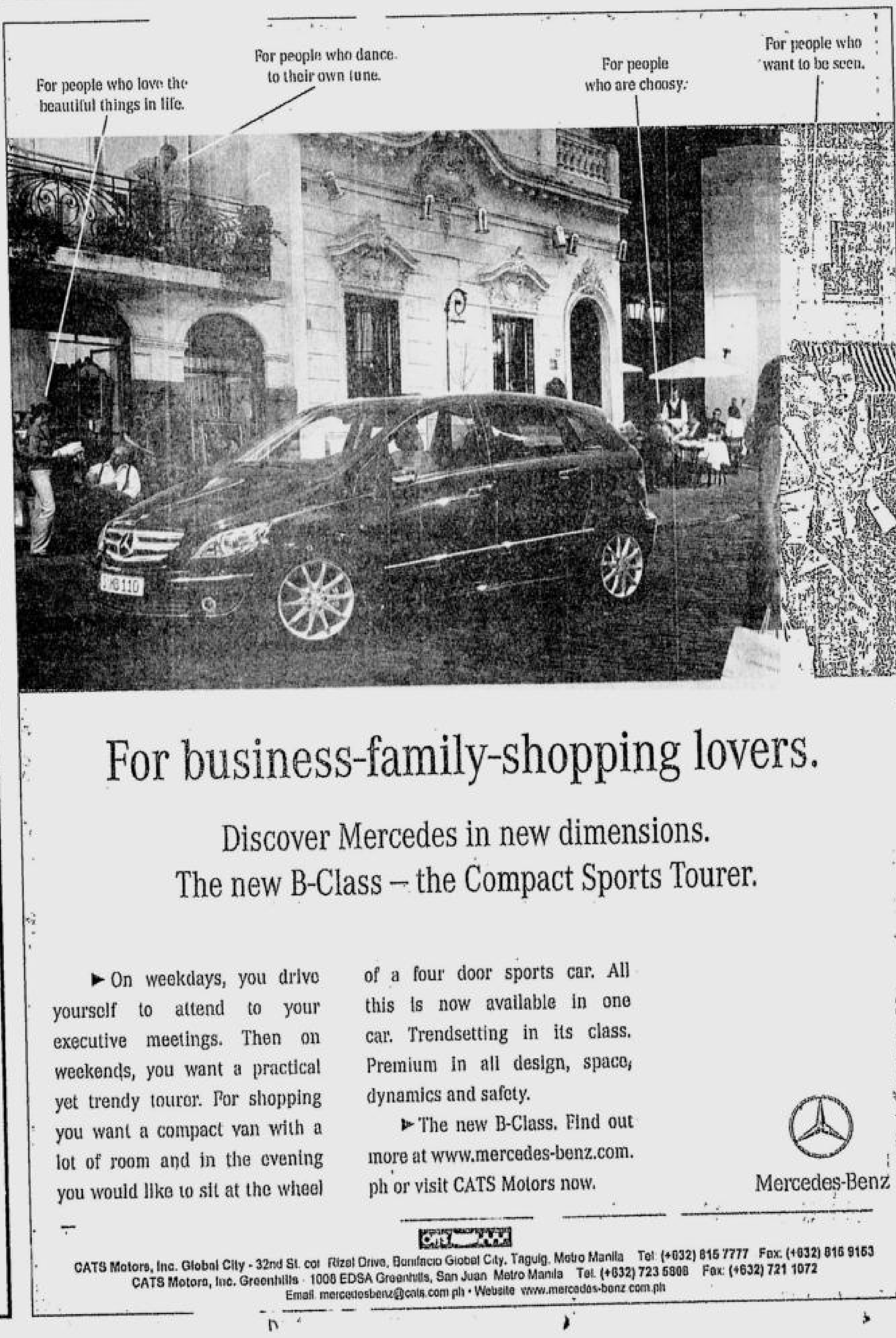
Accordingly, all parties concerned are hereby informed that copies of said standards and implementing guidelines may be secured from the BPS Information Services.

Makati City, February 07, 2006.

(Sgd.) PETER B. FAVILA
Secretary

Recommended by:

(Sgd.) JESUS L. MOTOOMULL
Bureau Director, BPS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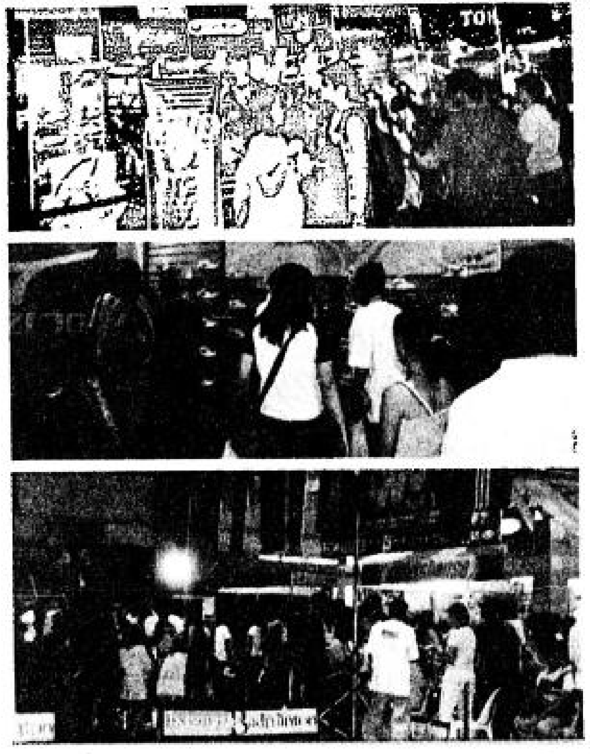

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7 dead in S. Leyte mudslide

From page A1717

sumed the six to be dead because the mudslide could have buried them alive, and that they could not conduct rescue operations due to continuous rain.

Tomol said the seven went to the area on board five rented motorcycles to inspect the road that had been hit by a landslide on Thursday.

Two drivers of the motorcycles were unharmed as they were able to run when the mudslide happened, she said.

FRANKLIN CALIGUID/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

A FLOOD victim aboard a makeshift boat in the Agusan riverside village of Barangay Buhangin, Butuan City, one of the 34 barangays worst hit by rising floodwaters.

Tomol said the landslide was caused by six days of incessant rain that softened the soil in the mountains.

The non-stop rain also triggered flash floods and landslides in the towns of San Ricardo and San Francisco on Panaon Island, Southern Leyte.

At least 2,500 people from four barangays of San Francisco were evacuated to the town's gymnasium due to the floods.

Affected were Barangays Santa Paz Norte, Santa Paz Sur, Bongcawisan Gabi and Jabay.

Floods also forced about 100 people residing near the riverbank in Barangay Pinut-an, San Ricardo to move to higher grounds.

Pinut-an, was one of the barangays in three towns in Panaon that were hit by a landslide in 2003 that killed 150 people.

A major landslide in Maharlika Highway in Barangay Agas-Agas, Sogod has also closed the road that is a major route for those traveling from Luzon to Mindanao.

Travelers from Luzon bound for Mindanao normally take buses that take off from the roll-on-roll-off port of Matnog in Sorsogon for Allen in Samar.

From Samar, the bus crosses to Leyte Island via the San Juanico Bridge en route to Liloan town in the southern tip of Leyte for the ferry ride to Lipata, Surigao province.

An alternate highway from Bato town in Leyte province that connects to Bontoc town of Southern Leyte was also closed to traffic after a portion of the road sank by two feet.

In St. Bernard town, the road leading to the Pacific towns was also rendered impassable after a portion of a road in Barangay Lepanto, also slipped by two feet due to heavy rains since Monday.

In Barangay Sta. Paz in Liloan town, residents were evacuated to higher grounds after its river overflowed.

In Maasin, 25 families were evacuated to flooding. Several mountain barangays in the city has been isolated due to landslide.

Surigao

In Tandag, Surigao del Sur, four days of heavy rains have submerged roads under four to 12 feet of water.

In Barangays Gamut and Unaban in Tago town, residents moved around in bancas because it was impossible to use cars and other vehicles.

Old and young people tried to go on with their normal life despite the flood. They jostle with each other to get rides in bancas, some of which have no outriggers and whose owners charge P50 per person even for a short distance of 600 meters.

The same situation prevailed in at least 15 towns and two cities in Caraga region, including Butuan City.

Surigao del Sur Gov. Vicente Pimentel Jr. has declared a state of calamity in the province. He also urged government agencies to contribute at least P20 million to ease the people's sufferings.

The floods, which killed at least five people and displaced more than 20,000 families in Caraga region, have also caused P50 million in damages to crops and infrastructure.

In Butuan City, the massive denudation of upland areas due to relentless logging was the main reason Caraga has become prone to flooding, according to Sr. Lydia Luscano, social action director of the Diocese of Tandag.

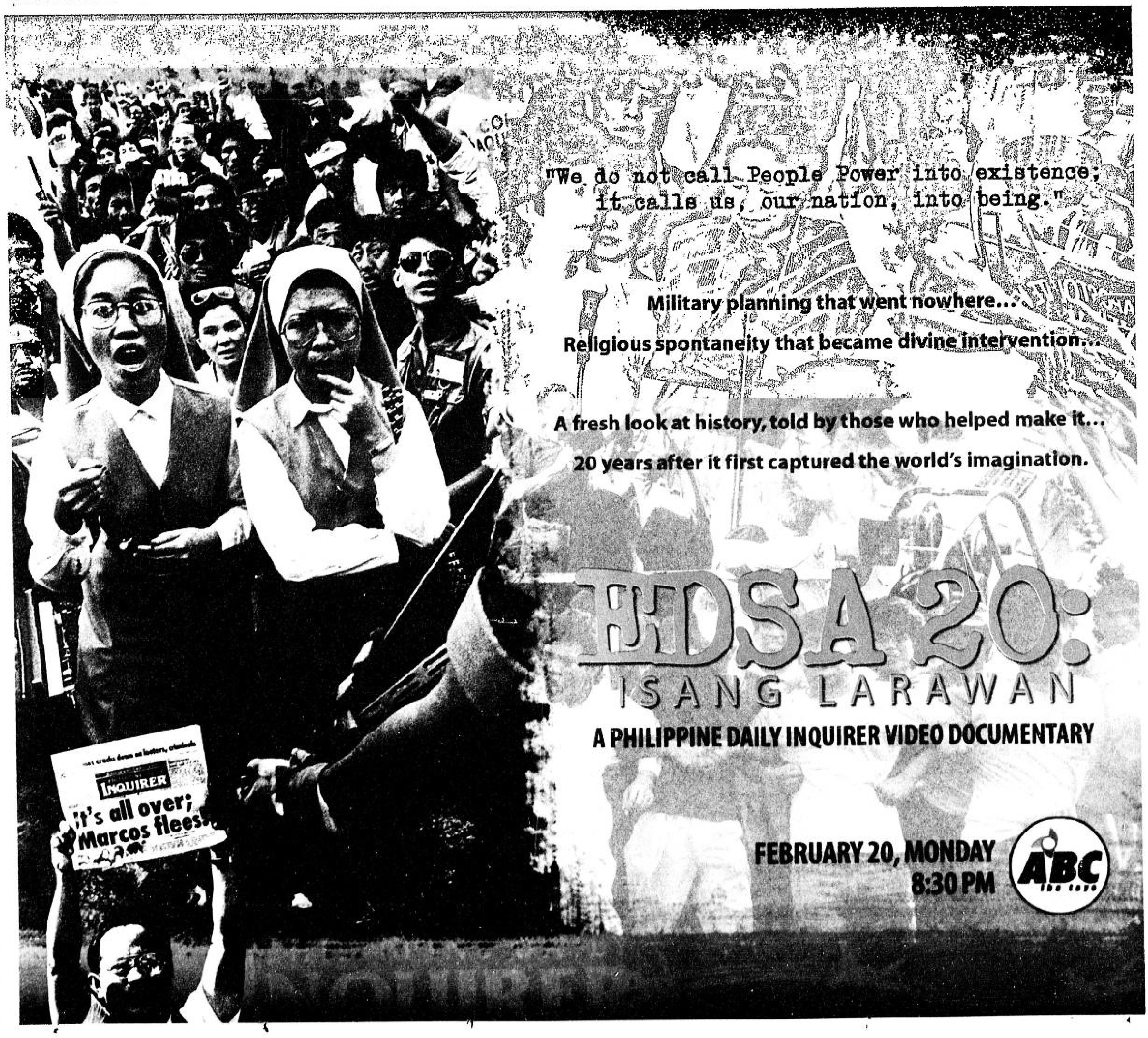
Luscano said hundreds of hectares of upland areas in Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur, which are "critical" to the region's ecological balance, were lost to "irresponsible" logging concessionaires.

"The standard reforestation programs of the logging concessionaires set by the government was not followed, plus the rampant illegal loggers," she said.

Luscano said her group had repeatedly called on local environment officials to address the issues but they were ignored.

She said there was a need for an immediate moratorium on logging in Caraga so the region's forest reserve could be assessed and impending disasters averted.

"Unless the government takes immediate action, disasters, even worse than what we saw in Aurora and Quezon, await Caraga folk," she warned. *With reports from Bert Pacate and Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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Love poems on radio heat up Baguio

From page A1

ems to his wife Sarah.

"Suddenly, [the station manager] told me he received numerous text messages commending the station for airing poems, and he asked me to do it the next day. And the next day. And the next day. Until I was doing it *na* for 15 minutes every day," he related.

At first, the daily broadcasts became the punch line for many jokes.

Station 95.9 BIG FM starts each day with a talk radio format and shifts to pop music by midday. Keith's segment always follows a very controversial commentary hour, which has drawn its share of scandals.

End of commentary

"My effort was sometimes laughed at because it seemed out of place [coming right after an ignominious discussion about politics]," Keith said.

But toward the yearend, the program began receiving mail from fans.

Based on the number of text messages he receives every morning, Keith said he discovered that many of his listeners were taxi drivers, department store clerks and neighborhood grocers who were usually up at dawn.

Some of the fans are amateur poets and Keith's program is giving them entry to literary stardom.

"I've read their poems on air. I've read the verses of a certain Mr. Element, as well as the poems of Leona C. They are good. I've also received poetry from as far as Pangasinan, La Union and the Ilocos provinces," Keith said.

Local poems

He opens his program with the phrase, "What a wonderful day for poetry and romance," before he delivers the poems of Macansantos and the late poet Jose Garcia Villa.

There are days when he introduces his audience to a verse or two of his own Nabaloy poem about a ritual birth.

Keith once spent a week reading stanzas of Edgar Allan Poe's "Annabel Lee," and immediately received queries from a flabbergasted fan.

"Because of the reception to Annabel Lee, I'm planning to read the Hudhud," he said. The Hudhud has 20 oral Ifugao chants that date back to the 7th century, and is enshrined in the World Heritage List as a masterpiece in oral and intangible heritage of humanity.

Keith also read a prayer by Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep (also known as Akhenaten) for the monotheistic worship of the god Aton, which he had imposed on his subjects in the 14th century BC.

Few people even know about this pharaoh, who fathered the more popular Tutankhamen and his cursed treasures, Keith said, but fans did not seem to be bothered by the poems' obscurity.

Inspirational

Most of them said the poems read over the airwaves had given them hope.

Rick said broadcast poetry provided him good dating tips.

"I watched Spider Man 2, and when [a character in the film] suggested using poetry to woo a sweetheart, I knew it was true. I am taking down the best poetic lines so I can text them to my girlfriend," he said in Filipino.

Many fans are looking forward to the station's broadcast on Valentine's Day to listen to the love poems of Macansantos and other Palanca awardees.

Keith's program has provided an anchor for this monthlong project of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, which will showcase multicultural poetry from Baguio and Cordillera every Saturday of February.

Fil-Ams show basic way of helping poor

From page A1

ria Caoile on Saturday when the INQUIRER met the group during its feeding and gift-giving program in a slum area in Parañaque City.

A wake-up call

"There must be a more basic way of helping the poor without taking away their dignity," said Caoile, a labor organizer affiliated with the US umbrella union AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations).

"Game shows may be a part of life, but there has to be control and a better way of treating (aspiring contestants). Maybe what happened was really a wake-up call for all of us," she said, when asked her views on the tragedy.

Following the stampede that left at least 71 people, mostly women, dead and several hundred injured, executives of ABS-CBN have come under severe criticism for allegedly producing shows that encourage mendicancy and dependency on dole-outs.

Charo Santos-Concio, ABS-CBN vice president for entertainment, said in a news conference earlier that "Wowowee" was meant to entertain and to give hope to the people.

Not encouraging mendicancy

"The reality today is that there are plenty among our countrymen who are poor," she said in Filipino. "We only want to give them hope. We're all human, and I think most of us have tried our luck in games of chance. But we are not encouraging mendicancy."

Tina Monzon-Palma, who heads the ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Bata, said part of the donations from sponsors was given to nongovernment organizations, like Bantay Bata.

"A lot of people have expressed their desire to help," she said in Filipino. "They want to give money to certain organizations. You can check with the NGOs (for an accounting of these donations)."

The FTH was in Isabela province when the stampede happened, said cochair Lottie Buhain, a retired chemist who used to work as a researcher at the Philippine General Hospital in the '60s.

The group was delivering P100,000 worth of assistance to Gov. Grace Padaca for families who recently lost their homes along the eroded banks of the Cagayan River. The aid package came with carabaos and cows for milking, said Buhain, now a community leader in Washington D.C.

Fund-raising initiatives

The 22 FTH volunteers come from all walks of "DC" life, including doctors and engineers, retirees and World Bank employees, she said. An estimated 100,000 Filipino-Americans live in the area.

For its main fund-raiser, the FTH holds the "Handog Dance and Dinner," a black-tie affair held in classy Washington hotels every November, according to volunteer Bing Branigin.

At times, donations simply pour in during a volunteer's birthday party, when the celebrator requests guests to contribute to the fund in lieu of personal gifts, Branigin said.

Since its founding 13 years ago, the FTH has been returning to the country every year to launch or follow up on projects with the support of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and, sometimes, in cooperation with other groups like Habitat for Humanity.

Beneficiaries

Projects in 77 provinces have touched the lives of an estimated 890,000 beneficiaries, the group said.

FTH has built 15 classrooms, with 13 more currently under construction. Each room costs around $5,000 to build.

The group has also helped 22 youths complete their university studies and is currently funding 59 more scholars.

It ships an average of two containers of books a year to the country to be donated to different schools. A container can hold 300 boxes, each box filled with up to a hundred books.

For the families affected by the December 2004 landslides that hit Aurora and Quezon, the group provided the victims not just with relief goods but motorized fishing boats and nets.

"You can say that we're also doing our work here quietly to pay back the country," Buhain said.

With a report from Nini Valera

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Heart-racing letters of US presidents to valentines

From page A1

Lyndon Johnson, then a young congressman from Texas, declared to his valentine, Lady Bird, mere weeks after they had met, "This morning I'm ambitious, proud, energetic and very madly in love with you."

College graduate Teddy Roosevelt put Alice Lee on a pedestal, telling her five days before they wed: "I worship you so that it seems almost desecration to touch you."

A new book of letters between presidents and their wives fleshes out momentous periods of history with the full range of human emotion—love, longing, snippiness, betrayal, loss, lust.

These men turned a resolute face to the world. In private, they could be goo. The women were easily their match in exchanging heart-racing prose and pulled no punches on tough stuff.

Blistering letter

Even as John Adams was in Philadelphia working on the Declaration of Independence and its assertion that "all men" are created equal, his loving spouse, Abigail, sent the future second president a blistering letter about the subjugation of wives—this, way back in March 1776.

"That your Sex are Naturally Tyrannical is a Truth," she wrote. "Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex."

She was a flirt, too, offering sweetly, "If you want more balm, I can supply you," in a letter the spring before they married in October 1764.

The correspondence in "My Dear President: Letters Between Presidents and Their Wives," by Library of Congress historian Gerard W. Gawalt, captures some of the couples in the first blush of their romance and follows them into the White House.

Presidents who were wild about their wives were not necessarily faithful to them—not even close. Some wives knew it.

Lyndon Johnson was a bull in the china shop when it came to women; Lady Bird once shrugged off his affairs as a "speck on a wedding cake."

Lucretia Rudolph was not so accommodating when she learned her fiance, James Garfield, had been stepping out. "James, to be an unloved wife, O Heavens," she wrote in 1857. They wed anyway; he was assassinated in 1881 just months after taking office.

Dwight's denial

Dwight D. Eisenhower, as Allied commander for Europe in World War II, tried in several letters to his stateside wife, Mamie, to shoot down rumors he was involved with his driver, Kay Summersby, with whom he formed an intense friendship. "I've no emotional involvements and will have none," he told his wife.

Civil War spouses and girlfriends received harrowing letters from the battlefield, for many presidents were soldiers when young. Whether in war or peace, many were ambitious men in eras of slow travel, meaning long absences from home and longings expressed in the overwrought language of their times.

"I have the Blues all the time," a love-struck Ulysses S. Grant told his sweetie, Julia Dent, writing from the Mexican War in 1848 two decades before becoming president.

"I feel the pulses of your love answering to mine," Chester Arthur wrote to his fiancee in New York, Ellen Lewis Herndon, during an 1858 Republican Party mission in Missouri. Arthur succeeded Garfield in 1881.

Such power couples enjoyed what might be politely called quality time.

Harry Truman alluded to one such encounter after Bess had visited him in July 1923, 22 years before he became president, when he was at a military training camp in Kansas. "I, of course, acted like a man brute," he wrote in a somewhat sheepish tone soon after she left.

Gawalt drew his 184 letters, telegrams and cables from 4,000 to 5,000 found in the papers of 23 presidents held by the Library of Congress, provided by family members or available at presidential libraries. About half were previously unpublished.

Strong-willed women

"What struck me is how early on that the wives were so vitally important to their husbands' careers," he said. "There's just an endless number of strong-willed women who are involved in these couples."

Exchanges between one such woman, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Franklin were friendly but emotionally distant. Such was the lasting result, Gawalt said, of his wife discovering FDR's affair with her social secretary Lucy Mercer 15 years before he became president.

"That's when the passion went out of that relationship," he said. "After that, I think, their relationship is pretty well summed up by the fact they were exchanging memorandums."

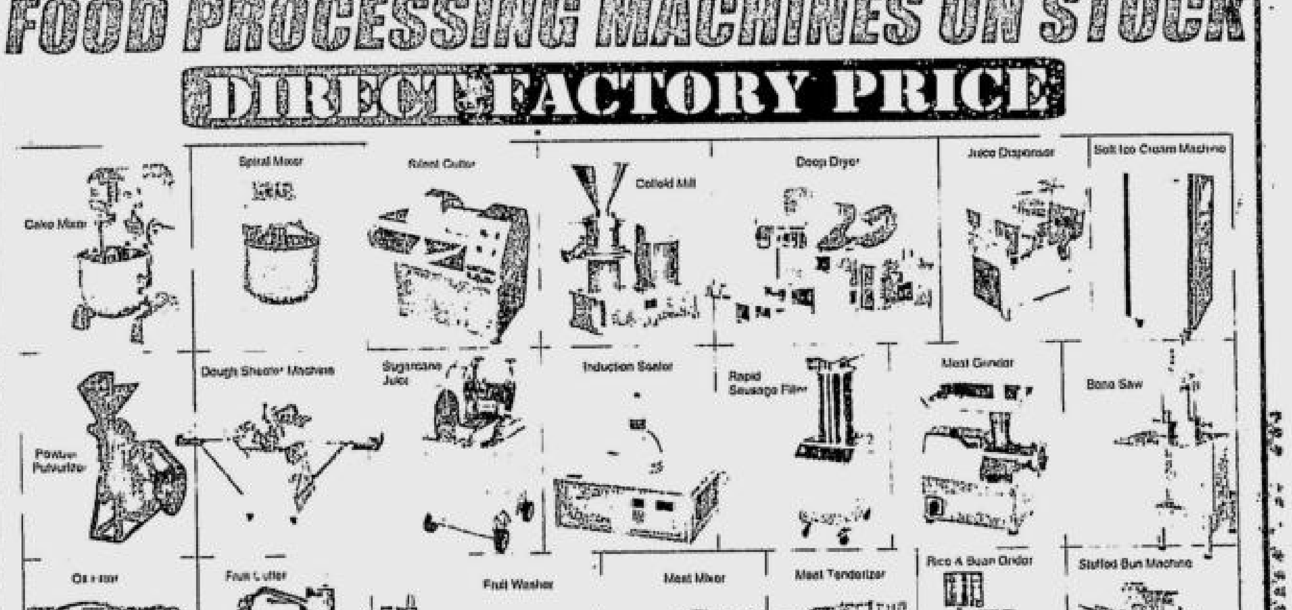
In one, Franklin complained to his wife that White House food portions had gotten out of hand and everyone must be cut back, for example, to one egg for breakfast instead of two.

Another no-nonsense woman, Barbara Bush, got a treacly note from her husband, George, asking her to show more affection for the television cameras in the 1988 campaign, like their opponents, the Dukakises.

"Sweetsie," he began. "Please look at how Mike and Kitty do it. Try to be closer in more—well er romantic—on camera. I am practicing the loving look, and the creeping hand. Yours for better TV and more demonstrable affection. Your sweetie pie coo coo.

"Love 'ya GB."

AP



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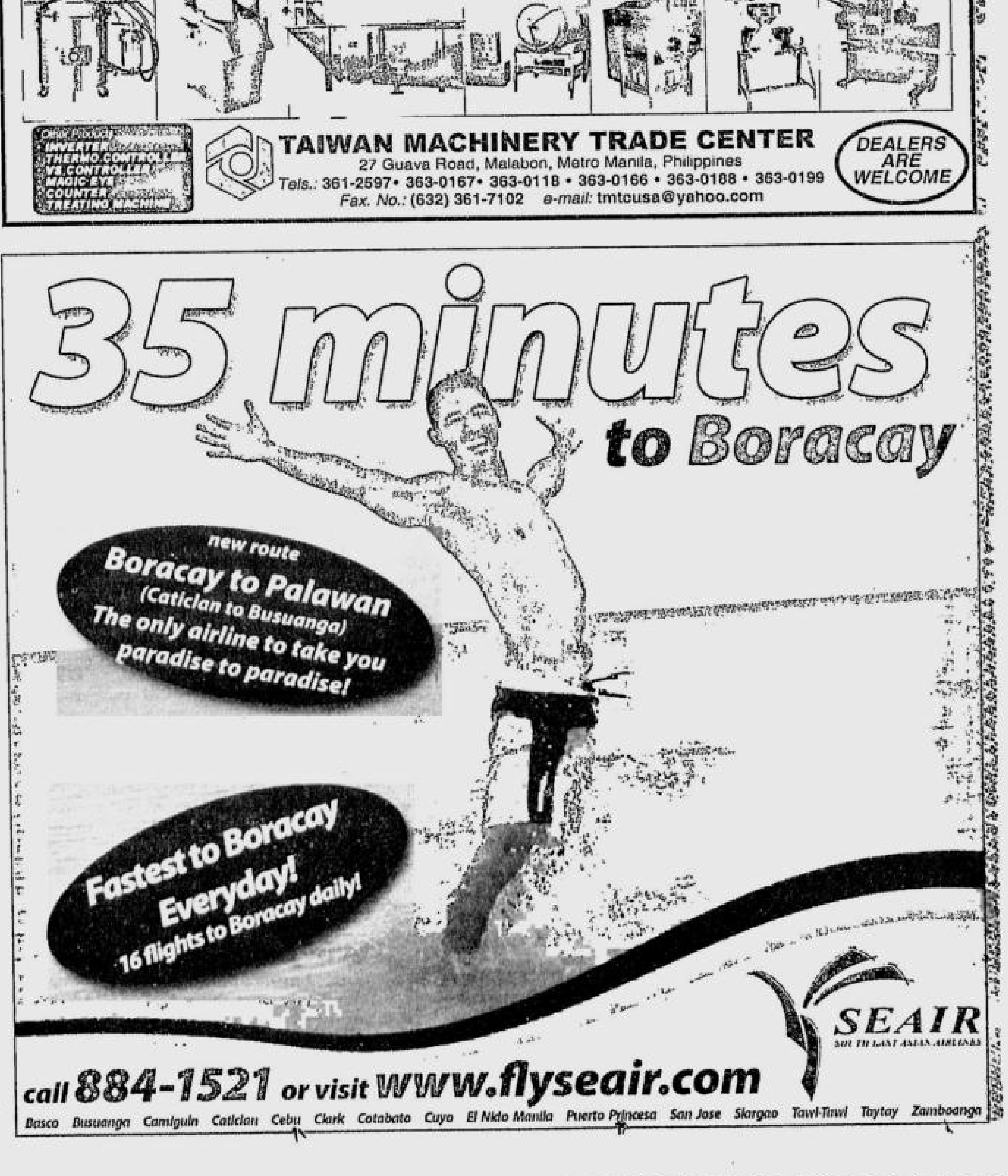
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Palace tells gas firms to explain price hikes

From page A1

per liter as a result of the 2-percentage-point increase in the VAT rate. The price of LPG rose between P8.90 and P9.80 per kg.

Cooperate

In a text message, Bunye said the Palace expected the oil companies to cooperate "in the spirit of transparency."

"We know they (oil firms) are deregulated, but it should not prevent the executive from making this initiative in the public interest," he said.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the President conveyed her instructions to him yesterday morning when she was informed about the oil price increases.

"(The President) inquired whether we do that (seek explanations from oil firms) and we said yes," Lotilla said in a phone interview.

The energy secretary said oil firms had been told to make the written explanations. They will be given a few days to submit them.

Strong message

Since the start of the year, the DOE has asked the oil firms not to immediately increase prices in one blow after global oil prices went up in December last year. Instead, the companies were asked to adjust prices in increments.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor described the Palace demand for an explanation from the oil companies as "a strong message" from the President.

While Malacañang recognized the oil firms' logistical requirements in importing, processing and bringing out oil, "they also have to recognize the fact that the President is vigilant in protecting our people, particularly the riding public," Defensor said.

"Any increase (in oil prices) to the detriment of our people will be closely monitored," he said in a phone interview.

The high prices not only in the Philippines, but also in other parts of the globe, are giving the big oil companies record profits.

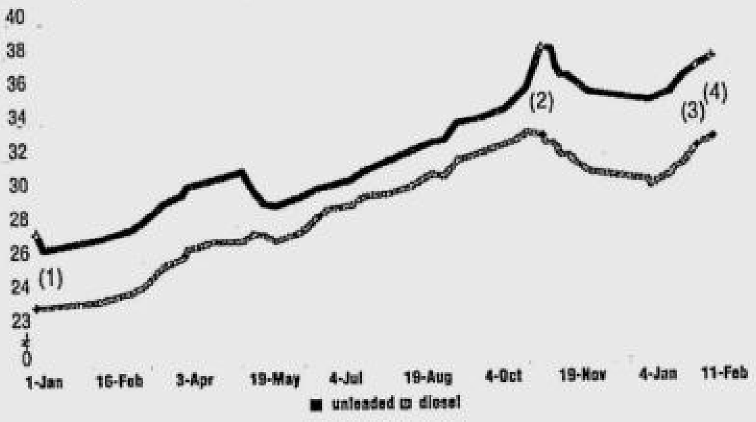
Texas-based Exxon Mobil Corp., the world's largest publicly traded oil company, surpassed Wall Street expectations when it reported $10.7 billion in fourth quarter profits on Jan. 30.

Biggest profit in US history

Exxon's profit of $36.1 billion for all of 2005, which rose 42 percent from 2004, was the largest annual net income of any corporation in US history. The amount was bigger than the economies of 125 countries.

Industry critics have called for a tax on excess profits following Exxon's disclosure of its record net income.

Average prices of unleaded gasoline & diesel
January 2005 to February 11, 2006, price per liter



	date	Unleaded low	Unleaded high	Diesel low	Diesel high	
(1)	Jan. 1, 2005	27.20	28.16	22.95	23.80	
(2)	Nov. 1, 2005	38.34	38.50	33.08	33.29	(with 10% R-VAT)
(3)	Feb. 1, 2006	37.02	37.49	32.09	33.00	(with 12% R-VAT)
(4)	Feb. 11, 2006	37.52	37.99	32.59	33.50	

The previous week, California-based Chevron Corp. reported annual profits of $14.1 billion, up from $13 billion in 2004. Chevron owns Caltex Philippines.

Pilipinas Shell's earnings soar

Royal Dutch Shell announced on Feb. 1 that it earned $5.4 billion in the last quarter of 2005. Analysts said Shell's profit for the entire year, $22.94 billion, an increase of 30 percent from the previous year, was a record for a company listed in the United Kingdom.

It was not known how much of this amount was contributed by its local subsidiary, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. But as early as June 2005, Pilipinas Shell had already earned P2.87 billion, almost matching its earnings of P2.98 billion for the entire 2004.

Another of the Philippines' top oil firms, Petron, surpassed its net income target for 2005 by the third quarter. Petron reported P4.8 billion in profits from January to September, exceeding its P3.6-billion net income target for the year by almost P1 billion.

It attributed its earnings to the lucrative export market, while Pilipinas Shell cited better refining margins and nonfuel retailing revenues, such as those derived from its Select convenience stores.

Bunye said the series of oil price increases "should serve as a constant reminder to all sectors—public and private—of the need to conserve our precious fuel."

He said Malacañang would continue to step up its efforts to search for alternative energy sources.

Bunye called on Congress to immediately act on pending energy bills, "including the one providing incentives for the production of ethanol and biodiesel."

His call was similar to the one made by US President George W. Bush in his State of the Union speech on Jan. 31. Bush proposed funding additional research into alternative energy sources because America needed to stop being "addicted to oil" from the Middle East.

The Philippines imports most of its oil requirements from the Middle East.

Biggest importers

Four oil companies—Caltex, Shell, Petron and Total—made it to the top 10 importers in 2005 based on the amount of customs duties and taxes they paid, according to the Bureau of Customs.

The only government office to make it to the list was the National Food Authority, which ranked second. Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. took the top spot.

But the companies' contributions were hardly enough to help the bureau meet its target collection last year as it struggled to come up with P151 billion in cash for most of 2005.

The BOC, which was headed by three different commissioners last year, only met, and slightly exceeded, its 2005 target after it was allowed to count non-cash collections as part of its revenue.

Toyota paid P10.79 billion in duties and taxes last year, while the NFA paid P10.23 billion, according to bureau figures.

The rest of the top five slots were occupied by the three big oil companies. Third was Caltex Philippines, which paid P7.68 billion; followed by Pilipinas Shell, P7.39 billion, and Petron, P5.28 billion.

Nestlé Philippines ranked sixth with P2.66 billion in customs duties and taxes paid. It was followed by Isuzu Philippines (P1.91 billion), Total Philippines (P1.71 billion), Fortune Tobacco (P1.60 billion) and Ford Group Philippines (P1.38 billion). *With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*

'Brod' recalls best, worst of Marcos years

From page A1

the 1960s where then Senator Marcos made his bid for the presidency.

After the convention, he and Golez went to the senator's house in San Juan. While they were waiting in the living room, NP delegates from Mindanao who just arrived started shaking his hand.

Jesus said he just smiled and shook hands, not letting them know that he was not the real Marcos.

Imelda

When Marcos and his wife Imelda arrived, the delegates from Mindanao became baffled, he said.

Golez, a close friend of the Marcoses', introduced him to Marcos' mother, Doña Josefa, as the illegitimate son of her husband, Jesus said.

"She stared at me and said, 'You look just like Ferdie,'" said Jesus. He said Marcos acknowledged that they looked alike and called him "Brod."

Jesus said he was asked to deliver the book "For Every Tear a Victory," written by Marcos, to the mayors of Negros Occidental.

Then one evening in December 1964, Jesus said Golez went to his house and asked if he had a suit.

"Mayor Golez told me Imelda had arrived in Negros and needed to go to Murcia town but Ferdinand had another commitment and could not come," Jesus said.

"He asked me to go with Imelda to Murcia. All I had to do was escort her around the plaza and wave. The people waved back at me, thinking I was Marcos," he said.

He was also asked by Armin Gustilo, then the political kingpin in northern Negros, to double for the presidential aspirant when Marcos could not make it to a speaking engagement in Cadiz.

"I sat in Gustilo's car and waved at the waiting people in Cadiz who were told that Marcos could not speak that day as he had to go to San Carlos City on some important business," Jesus said.

MARCOS look-alike Quevenco recalls experiences during the strongman's rule.

CARLA P. GOMEZ/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

On another occasion, he was asked to meet the real Marcos at the Bacolod airport because the then presidential candidate had to go to Victorias.

Jesus said Marcos told him he wanted to sleep so he would look fresh. Soon enough, Marcos was fast asleep beside him.

Jesus was then left with the task of waving to the crowd. Marcos woke up when they arrived in Victorias.

Marcos did not forget

Marcos did not forget him when he became President on Nov. 9, 1965. Jesus got a telegram from the President, asking him to send his biodata and to state what job he wanted in government.

Jesus, however, did not ask for any position because he had his insurance business in Negros. He also refused requests by some politicians to double for the President again because he had a family to raise.

But then the First Lady had to grace the inauguration of the new Social Security System building and asked Jesus to come.

When Imelda saw him, she asked the aide to bring Jesus to her. She then called him Junior and asked him what she could do for him.

Handwritten appointment

When he told her that he was already the manager of an insurance company, Imelda persisted. So he asked her if his wife, a teacher in Silay, could be transferred to the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS). Imelda told Jesus to tell Thelma to go to Manila.

Armed with a picture of her husband and Marcos together, Thelma said she went to Malacañang and met Executive Secretary Rafael Salas.

She said she was brought to Imelda who was fitting a *terno* and chatted with her. She was then told to return the next day to meet the President.

Marcos gave her a handwritten note that said "I hereby direct the appointment of Thelma Quevenco to the GSIS."

"I started out as a casual employee and when the President saw me again he asked if I needed anything. I told him I would like to earn my promotion by merit," Thelma said.

Thelma later became operations manager of the Ministry of Human Settlements in Western Visayas.

Drawbacks

But being a look-alike of Marcos had its drawbacks, especially in the 1970s when the President became unpopular.

Jesus recalled that he was in a suit and was walking on the Escolta when a group of activists saw him and chased him.

He said he slipped into a department store, bought a T-shirt, put it on, and then walked out of the store. The mob did not notice him.

On another occasion, Jesus and his wife were on board a chauffeur-driven car on the way to the Manila airport when someone noticed him. Then an angry crowd, thinking he was Marcos, surrounded the vehicle.

Thelma convinced the crowd that he was not the real Marcos when she shouted in Ilonggo that he was her husband.

After the incident, Jesus told his wife that he did not want to go to Manila again.

Anger

When sugar prices began to plummet in Negros during the Marcos years, Jesus said he would meet with friends who would curse the President and call him that "bastard brother of yours."

As the people's anger grew against Marcos so did that of some of the members of Jesus' family.

The couple said their outspoken daughter, Babette, took an autographed picture Marcos had sent them and burned it at a rally.

Although some members of the family supported the opposition during the snap election of February 1986, the Quevenco couple remained Marcos loyalists. They even blamed Marcos' downfall on the abuses of the people around him.

Thelma said she was disappointed with Imelda because she took advantage of her position. Still, she said, Imelda could charm anyone and described her as a fighter and a survivor.

But one thing they were proud of was that they did not get rich as a result of knowing the Marcoses. The Quevencos said they never took advantage of their ties to the Marcos couple.

Vague gov't plan . . .

From page A1

22-25, 1986, peaceful revolution that ended the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos.

The 77-year-old Ramos spoke at a news conference before his departure for Bangkok to attend an Eminent Persons Group meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"I'm saying that it is deplorable that now with just 10 days to go, there are no announced official government plans for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Edsa I," Ramos said.

"I am not seeing any advanced plans for this very important event unlike in previous years which were not that significant. Of course, they were not special anniversaries but this is the 20th anniversary," he stressed.

He said that not even the rift between Ms Arroyo and Aquino should affect the commemoration of Edsa I.

On Saturday, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said Ms Arroyo had no plans to be on the same stage as Aquino during the Edsa I celebrations.

Defensor said the President had only confirmed attendance at the wreath-laying rites at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani on Feb. 25 and would be out of town for most of the celebrations.

Aquino, 73, broke away from Ms Arroyo in July over allegations the President stole the May 2004 presidential election. Aquino is at the forefront of a campaign to force Ms Arroyo's resignation for election fraud—a charge which the President has vehemently denied.

Gov't must lead

"Whatever it is, rift, difference, slight discomfort toward each other, it is still the job of government to lead the way," Ramos said.

He also said it was the government's responsibility to "maintain, enlarge, expand and brighten the spirit of Edsa."

Aquino was thrust into power in the aftermath of the 1986 rebellion staged by Marcos' defense minister, Juan Ponce Enrile, and Ramos, then Armed Forces deputy chief of staff.

Calling it a unique "Philippine technology" that many other countries have tried—and at times failed—to replicate, Edsa "people power" should be preserved, Ramos said.

"It is the spirit of it that lives on," he said, taking a swipe at those who claimed that the spirit of Edsa was long dead.

Spirit lives on

"It's not dead. To me, it's very, very alive and it could be the key to a better future for Filipinos," he said.

For the spirit of Edsa to flourish, Ramos said the country's leaders should do only four things: Consolidate the Philippine team by working together to eliminate graft and corruption; continue the gains of the previous administrations but discontinue the bad practices; compete to win; and clean up the "messy things in government that lead to gridlock, unceasing investigations, vindictiveness and disunity."

Ramos said he had been informed that the Edsa People Power Commission had submitted its proposed plans for the 20th anniversary celebration "about a month ago."

"I don't know what has happened to those plans. Even I am scouring the newspapers to find out what's going to be my role because even I have to make my schedule every day," he said.

Since nothing had been announced yet, he said he had "blocked off" the four days of Edsa on his schedule just for the celebrations. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

RP may be drawn into debate over cartoons

From page A1

newspapers, as far as I can determine, published the offending cartoons, the Philippine press cannot detach itself from this burning debate over press freedom, as Filipino editors are in the business of deciding each day what stories and cartoons to publish.

At some point, our newspapers will find themselves embroiled in this controversy. The controversy polarized much of the European press behind the Danish newspaper in solidarity to defend press freedom.

Conflict starts

The conflict started on Sept. 30, 2005, when the Danish paper, Jyllands-Posten, published the controversial cartoons. On Oct. 20, a Muslim ambassador complained to the Danish prime minister and demanded an apology. On Jan. 26, 2005, Saudi Arabia recalled its ambassador and boycotted Danish goods.

On Jan. 30, gunmen raided the European Union delegation office in Gaza, demanding an apology. On Feb. 1, Die Welt in Germany, France Soir in Paris, La Stampa in Italy, El Periodico in Spain, and Volkskrant in the Netherlands published the cartoons. On Feb. 7, Iran cut all trade ties with Denmark.

Three cartoonists involved in the project, first intended as a book for Muslim children to contribute to integration, have received death threats. We must consider that Denmark has a long tradition of vigorous, satirical cartooning.

France Soir, in publishing the cartoon, said, "Enough lessons from these reactionary bigots."

In Indonesia, protesters attacked the Danish Embassy. Europeans and their diplomats received threats in Islamic countries. The more the Islamic governments stepped up diplomatic and trade pressure, the more did the European countries closed ranks behind the issue of press freedom and Denmark.

The Indonesian foreign ministry, in a statement after the storming of the Danish Embassy in Jakarta, said: "It involves the whole Islamic world vis-à-vis Denmark." Vis-à-vis the trend of Islamophobia, the Senate in Pakistan passed a resolution, saying "this outrageous and provocative campaign cannot be justified in the name of freedom of expression and of the press."

Right to publish

The European newspapers stoutly defended their decision to publish. The front page of France Soir carried the headline: "Yes, we have the right to caricature God," accompanied by a cartoon depicting figures from the Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Buddhist faiths on a cloud. The Christian figure was shown saying, "Don't complain, Mohammed, we've all been caricatured here."

Die Welt reprinted the original caricature and its editor in chief said: "It's at the very core of our culture that the most sacred things can be subjected to laughter." This is in the light of the fact that Christ has not been spared ridicule by a democratic press. The publication of some Western newspapers of "Piss Christ," of the controversial 1989 photograph of Christ on a crucifix submerged in a jar of urine (by the American photographer Andres Soriano), caused a furor. The Archbishop of Melbourne led an unsuccessful court suit to have it banned. The picture did not spark a wave of protests among Christians.

French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy echoed the views of many in the West when he said he preferred an "excess of cartooning than an excess of censorship."

Some observers have noted that Denmark, a small European country, have borne the brunt of the Islamic reaction and have asked why some key Islamic governments had not been as violent in reacting to Denmark as they had been to the big nations with retaliatory powers, such as the United States after it invaded Iraq, and France, which has strategic interests in the Middle East.

Subservient press

The actions taken by many of the Islamic countries stem from the fact that they are mostly authoritarian societies where the press is subservient. Their presumption is that the press in democracies ought to hew close to government policy. Hence, their diplomatic and trade pressures are focused on governments.

Most Australian newspapers didn't publish the cartoons. They took a middle ground position expressed by the Melbourne Age editorial. It said: "The Danish cartoons were neither insightful nor effective, just stereotypical smears. At the level of content, there was little justification to run them. Even given their curiosity value, such material carries a responsibility to consider whether the publication outweighs any like offense. Having the freedom to publish does not mean we must publish to prove it."

However, the same editorial said: "Any newspaper ought to be offended, by the use of threats or violence to dictate what may be published: an intimidated media is no longer a free media."

It concluded: "The reaction to the 12 obscure cartoons is evidence of the deeply damaged relationship between the West and Islam."

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179 in Pasig raid test positive for drugs

By Luige A. del Puerto and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

MORE THAN HALF OF THE 285 persons who were tested for illegal drugs following their arrest in a drug bust in Pasig City last Friday have tested positive.

As of 3 p.m. yesterday, 179 people had tested positive for shabu, 11 of whom were minors.

"We still hope that many would turn out to be negative," said Director Marcelo Ele, the chief of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (AIDSOTF) which conducted the raid.

A total of 319 persons—composed of 260 adults and 59 minors—had been arrested in the raid of a compound of about 40 shanties serving as "one-stop shop shabu restaurants" on F. Soriano Street in Pasig City.

As of yesterday, 285 urine samples had already been taken although it was not clear if all the suspects would undergo testing.

Ele said that during Friday's raid, the police team invited two councilmen from Barangay Palatiw to witness and to sign the inventory of evidence taken from the site as required by law.

However, the councilmen could not be found, along with the chair of the barangay.

"They disappeared," Ele said.

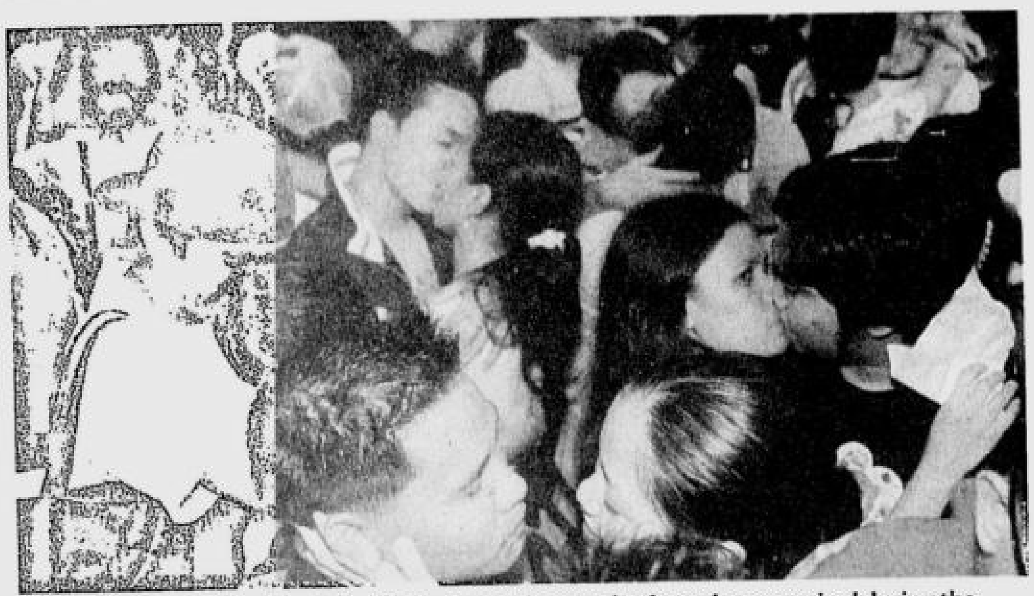
Luckily, a councilman and several watchers from the nearby barangay of Sto. Tomas helped out, according to Ele. (The area where the shabu center is located is the subject of a boundary dispute.)

It was obvious that the center had the cooperation of the community, the police official said. Ele described it as "impregnable;" it even had its own closed circuit TV to monitor the people coming in and out of the area.

Following the raid, Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio had ordered the demolition of the shanties inside the compound on F. Soriano Street.

In addition, the 19-man team of the Police Community Precinct 20 of the City Police had been relieved, as well as the entire antinarcotics units of the Pasig City Police and the Eastern Police District (EPD).

The policemen were also sent for drug testing to the PNP Headquarters in Camp Crame the other day to determine if they themselves were using drugs, EPD director Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela said.



LOVE was definitely in the air last Saturday as thousands of couples smooched during the Lovapalooza kiss fest held at the Baywalk area along Roxas Boulevard. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Couples pucker up for kiss fest

By Tina G. Santos

SIERRA BASMAYOR, 24, MUST HAVE FELT that she was the luckiest girl in the world when her boyfriend, Anthony Ng, 25, got down on his knees, took out a ring and asked her to marry him.

Ebner Detablan, on the other hand, was speechless when more than 20 boys and girls carrying bouquets came out on stage as his wife, Christine, professed her unconditional love for him.

These were among the highlights of the "Lovapalooza 2006" kissing festival where thousands of couples gathered for a massive public display of affection at the Baywalk area along Roxas Boulevard last Saturday.

At the stroke of midnight, they locked lips for 10 seconds—longer if they got carried away—as the song, "What the world needs now is love" played in the background and fireworks went off over Manila Bay.

Similar events were also held simultaneously in Cebu, Davao and Pampanga attended by thousands of couples.

"More than 2,000 couples registered this year. We're not beating any record this time. We're just building a tradition," said Ginggay Joven, event public relations consultant.

Around 800,000 people turned up in the four venues, she added.

MMDA ready for closure of trash dumps

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA DEVELOPMENT Authority (MMDA) yesterday assured residents that trash collection in the metropolis will not be affected by the impending closure of two major garbage dumps on Feb. 16.

MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno said the agency has long been prepared for the shutdown of the Navotas and Payatas dumps.

"Metro Manila will not be affected. The people will not feel the closure, because we have been prepared for this since a year ago, as we already knew about the required closure as mandated by law," Nacianceno said.

Closure mandated by law

The closure is in compliance with Republic Act 9003, also known as the Ecological Waste Management Act which provides for the shutdown of all open and controlled garbage dumps.

Of the 7,000 tons of garbage generated by Metro residents everyday, 1,200 tons are dumped in Navotas while 1,500 tons is taken to Payatas, the MMDA Solid Waste Management Office said.

On the other hand, local governments, through their waste segregation and recovery programs, process 1,000 tons of trash.

Sufficient number of landfills

"We can easily absorb the trash … We have sufficient landfills to receive the trash, because we're basically prepared … We have already met with [local government units] to discuss the possibilities after the closure," Nacianceno told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

As a result, Metro Manila will not experience a repeat of the garbage crisis in 2001 when the San Mateo landfill was closed, he added.

Nacianceno said the garbage that would have been taken to the two dumps will be diverted to the 14-hectare Montalban Solid Waste Disposal Facility in Rodriguez, Rizal, and the Clark Development Corp. trash facility in Capas, Tarlac.

Right now, the bulk of Metro Manila's trash already goes to the Montalban facility which processes 1,800 tons of garbage daily from 10 of the metropolis' cities and municipalities.

Capas, on the other hand, processes 500 tons of trash daily.

A landfill in Navotas is also set to open, he added. The owner, however, is still waiting for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to issue the Environment Compliance Certificate required for the dump's operation.

Meanwhile, the MMDA also urged the public to segregate their garbage, saying this will reduce the volume of trash generated by a household by 30 percent.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Privatization and Management Office ("PMO"), through its Bids and Awards Committee ("PMO-BAC"), intends to procure the services of a financial advisor ("FA") in connection with the privatization of the 55% of the share of stock of Philippine Postal Corp. ("Philpost") under a success fee arrangement.

   The Approved Budget for the Contract ("ABC") is FOUR MILLION PESOS (P 4M), to be paid by the PMO and chargeable against the success fee which shall not exceed .75% of the total sales proceeds from the privatization of the 55% shares of stock of Philpost.

   The fees for the FA shall be payable as follows:

PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES	FEES
I-Valuation	Preparation of valuation and appraisal report, information memorandum and privatization plan	Not to exceed Four Million Pesos (P4M)
II-Implementation	Implementation of the privatization plan, as approved by the Privatization Council	Not to exceed .75% of the sales proceeds, less the fee paid for the Valuation Phase

2. The PMO now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent ("LOIs") from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for Financial Advisor Services. Interested FAs must submit their LOIs on or before 22 February 2006 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, by hand, to the Bids and Awards Committee, Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City and secure the Eligibility Documents and Shortlisting Requirements therefrom for a minimal fee of P5,000.00.

   Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents and Short Listing Requirements shall be on the date of the Opening of Eligibility Documents on 27 February 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the 6th Floor, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Only those found eligible shall be considered for short listing and only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.

3. The PMO-BAC shall draw up the short list of FAs from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 ("RA 9184") and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A ("IRR-A"). The short list of prospective bidders shall not exceed five (5) FAs. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:
   a. 30% — General experience of the FA, considering both the overall experience of the firm and the individual experience of the principal and key staff, including relevant experience of the principal and key staff from previous employment;
   b. 30% — Privatization experience of the FA;
   c. 20% — Qualifications of personnel who may be assigned to the project;
   d. 20% — Dealings of the FA with the Philippine Government.

   The passing rate to be eligible is 70%.

4. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, bidding for the hiring of an FA will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures. Only bids from short listed FAs will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents to be obtained from the PMO. The contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder, who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The PMO-BAC shall evaluate bids using the ***Quality-Cost Based Evaluation*** procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders to be obtained from the PMO.

5. Interested FAs may obtain the eligibility and short listing requirements, and the other bidding documents, from the PMO-BAC at the address given below from Mondays to Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The deadline for submission of bids from the short listed FAs shall be on 15 March 2006, 10:00 a.m.

6. The PMO/PMO-BAC reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any formality in the bid requirements, declare the bidding a failure, annul the bidding process without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and award the contract to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Government.

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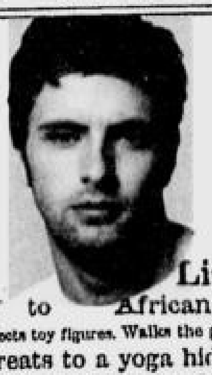

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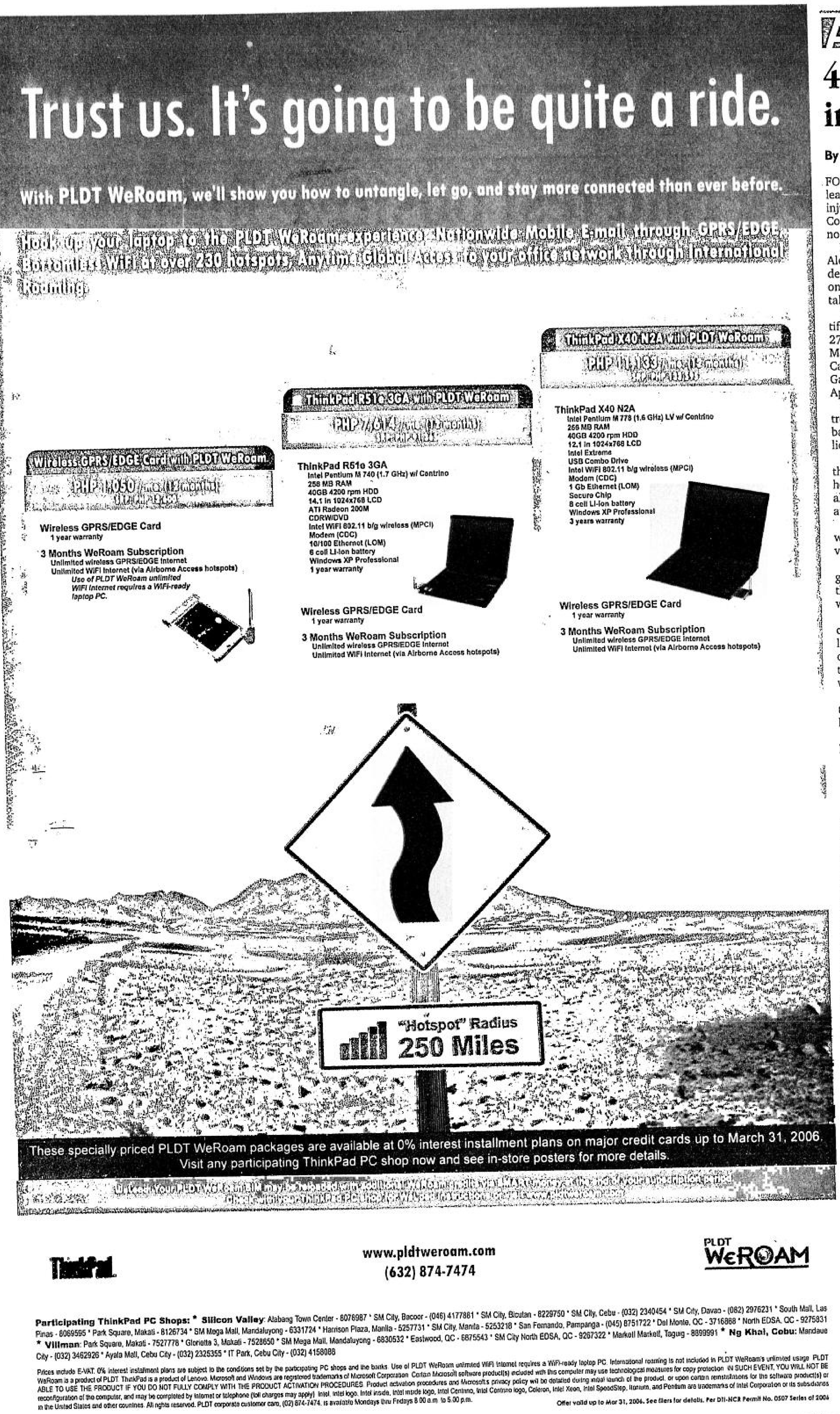

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4 killed, 11 hurt in grenade blast

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FOUR PEOPLE WERE KILLED WHILE AT least 11 others, including four children, were injured during a grenade blast at the Parola Compound in Tondo, Manila yesterday afternoon.

Eugene Candilasa, a certain alias Toto, Alex Laniojan and Randy Gallos, all residents in the compound, were declared dead on arrival at the Gat Andres Bonifacio Hospital.

The injured, on the other hand, were identified as Roger Buhayan, 53; Amelita Aldaya, 27; Emil Aldaya, 30; Elena Aldaya, 49; Jonald Masangya, 38; Jeffrey Jamison, 25; Regie Castillo, 23; Jerome Magbanua, 12; Michael Gallardo, 10; Amy Diamante, 10; and Arnel Aplacador, 4.

They were taken to the same hospital for treatment, according to SPO3 Norman Cristobal and PO1 Archie Bernabe of the Manila Police District Station 2.

Initial investigation showed that some of the older victims were drinking outside their homes in the compound when Candilasa, alias Toto and Laniojan approached them and attacked Buhayan at around 1:20 p.m.

A brawl broke out between the two groups when Candilasa took out a .38 caliber revolver and a grenade.

Witnesses at the scene suddenly heard the grenade explode, resulting in the death of the three men who started the fight and Gallos, who was drinking with the other victims.

"Most of the people in this area have unlicensed firearms for protection or for use in illegal activities," Supt. Rolando Miranda, chief of the MPD Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (CIDU), told reporters in an interview.

The police said that witnesses identified the suspects as members of a notorious holdup group in the area.

"We are still determining the motive behind the attack on Buhayan," Miranda said.

METROBRIEFS

Drive vs illegal vendors

THE QUEZON City government will relocate illegal vendors who sell their wares along the stretch of Commonwealth Avenue. The vendors will be assigned stalls in the public market for which they will only need to pay P20 daily, according to Manuel Buncio, special action group chief of the city's Department of Public Order and Safety (DPOS). The public market can accommodate as many as 1,000 vendors, Buncio said. Earlier, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. ordered a massive sidewalk clearing operation on Commonwealth Avenue—from Manggahan to Litex-Doña Carmen—beginning Feb. 16—in line with his "zero vendors" policy along the national highway. The clearing operations will begin this week after notices are sent out to the affected parties.

DJ Yap

Beware of fake land titles

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has warned the public against syndicates that pawn fake land titles for hundreds of thousands of pesos. It issued the reminder after the arrest of three women who duped a prospective land buyer of half a million pesos. "Buyers should immediately check land titles with the local Register of Deeds to avoid being victimized by these syndicates," NBI National Capital Region (NCR) chief Ruel Lasala said in an interview. Suspects Yolanda Sibal, Leonida Mangila and Nenita Dinglasan, were arrested in a Pasay City restaurant last Feb. 3. NBI NCR Special Investigator Roberto Divinagracia said their arrest was based on the complaint of Irma Sicat, of Turing St., BF Homes, Las Piñas. According to the victim, Sibal had offered to pawn the title to an 8,000-sq m lot she owned in Trece Martires, Cavite for P800,000. Sicat said she gave the suspects P500,000 as partial payment in December 2003. But when she checked with the Trece Martires' Registry of Deeds, the victim found out that the land title was fake. Sicat Immediately sought the NBI's help, leading to the suspects' arrest.

Margaux C. Ortiz

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Clutch baskets power hot Giants past Bulls

PUREFOODS' Roger Yap shoots point-blank off Red Bull's Enrico Villanueva (left) and Celino Cruz. RYAN LIM

GAME WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
6:45 p.m.—Red Bull Barako vs Purefoods

By June Navarro

ASLEEP THE PAST TWO games, the Giants are now awake.

Purefoods Chunkee pounced on Red Bull's rash of turnovers and struck back with a 103-97 victory at the Cuneta Astrodome last night to avoid a fatal 0-3 hole in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference Finals.

Noy Castillo, James Yap and Kerby Raymundo made the biggest plays as the Giants survived the fouling out of Marquin Chandler and moved just a game behind, 1-2, in the best-of-seven championship series.

"It's nice to have players who have pride," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio after the Giants made the initial step in duplicating a feat they pulled off four years ago.

Purefoods was also down 0-2 in the championship series before capturing the 2002 Governors Cup crown at the expense of the Alaska Aces.

"They've been talking about a sweep," said Gregorio, who averted a third straight loss in which no team in league history has ever overcome. "They said we were not making good decisions in the end, but this time we were able to hang on."

Unusually erratic, the Bulls committed 26 turnovers which the foul-saddled Giants converted into 26 points.

Chandler fouled out off James Penny underneath the basket with still three minutes and 49 seconds to go. Marc Pingris was disqualified much earlier, while Raymundo and Jondan Salvador had five and four fouls each at crunchtime.

Yap scored eight points in the fourth quarter and Raymundo had a pair of baskets late in the period that halted a furious rally by the Bulls. Paul Artadi and Salvador also contributed key baskets down the stretch.

"Our first two gameplans didn't work but the third one had to," said Gregorio, whose Giants hounded the Bulls with a relentless full-court defense all game long. "The consensus was that Red Bull can pressure us every night, why not give it to them?"

Chandler left the floor after drilling in a team-high 26 points and pulling down 11 rebounds. James Yap added 17 while Salvador and Raymundo chipped in 14 and 13 points, respectively. Bench scoring was also a factor for the Giants, whose second stringers outscored the Bulls, 33-21.

Penny carried the load for the Bulls with 31 points. Rico Villanueva, who tried to revive the Bulls with solid incursions in the final two minutes, finished with 25. Lordy Tugade made all of his 14 points in the first half and was hardly a factor in the Bulls offense in the second.

"I'm not really disappointed with the result but this will give us something to think about next game," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao.

"We're still up one game."

The scores:

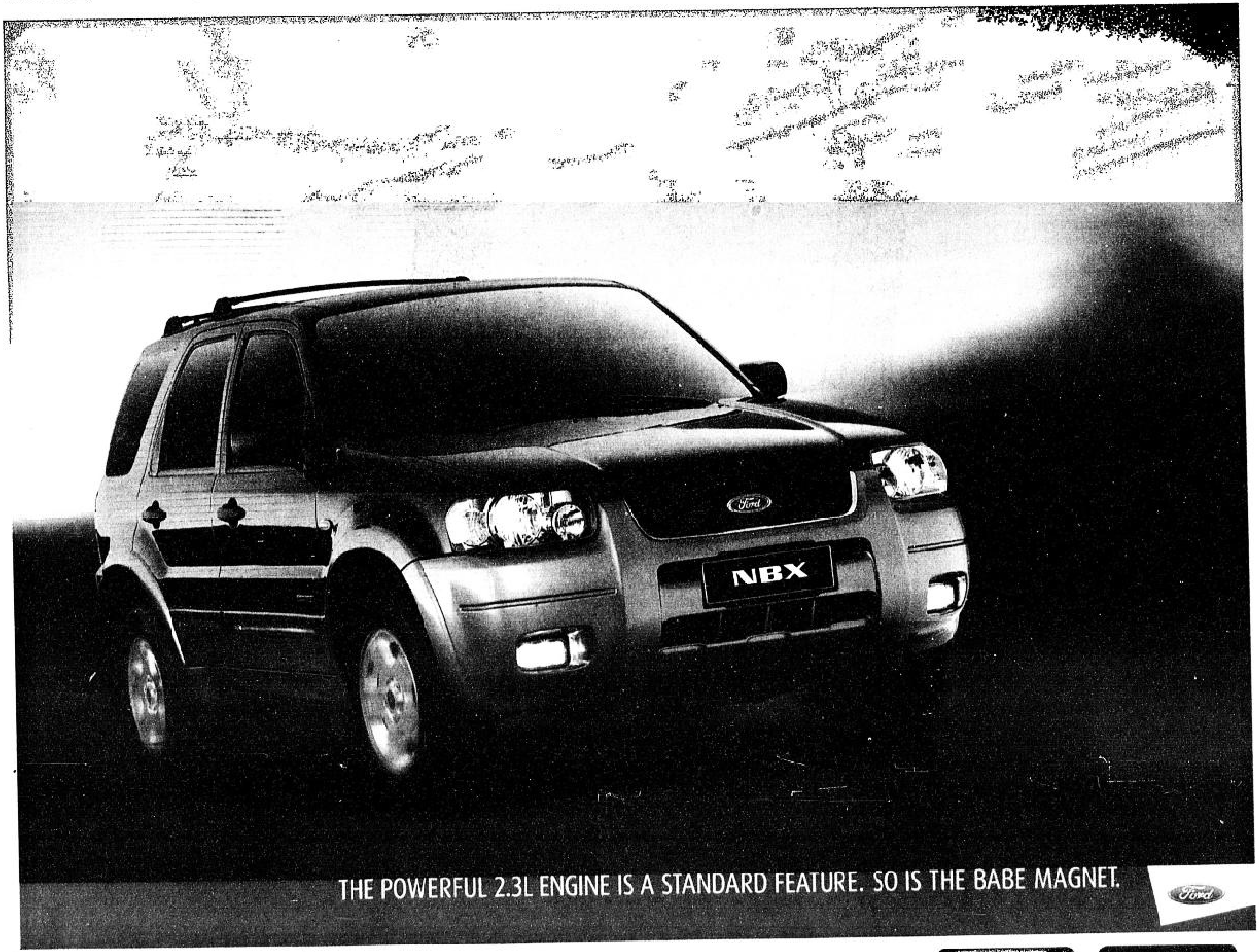
PUREFOODS 103—Chandler 26, Yap 17, Salvador 14, Raymundo 13, Castillo 13, Pingris 8, Artadi 6, Yee 4, Yap 2.

RED BULL 97—Penny 31, Villanueva 25, Tugade 14, Fonacier 9, Valenzuela 9, Baguio 6, Cruz 3, Najorda 0, Bugia 0, Robinson 0, Torion 0, Pennisi 0.

Quarters: 26-26, 54-44, 77-68, 103-97

Welcoat to bare its plans

THE OWNERS OF THE PRO LEAGUE'S EXPANSION side, Welcoat, will discuss the squad's plans in tomorrow's PSA Forum at the main function room of the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. Raymund Yu and Terry Que, amateur basketball's most successful cage partnership at the moment, are the main guests in the public sports program aired over Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Pagcor and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza. The weekly session begins at 10:30 a.m.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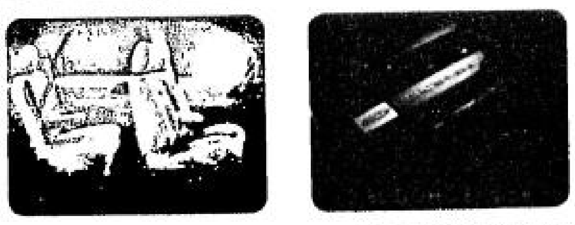

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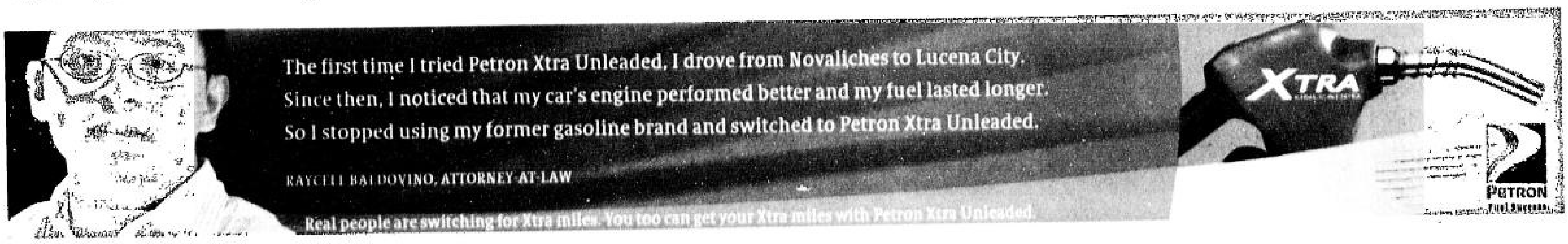
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Red Lions, Lady Eagles stay unscathed

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Men's basketball		
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Far Eastern	3	1
EAC	2	1
Ateneo	2	1
Santo Tomas	1	1
St. Benilde	1	2
Univ. of East	1	2
La Salle	1	2
Lyceum	0	3

STANDINGS	W	L
Women's basketball		
Ateneo	3	0
Far Eastern	3	0
Lyceum	2	2
Santo Tomas	1	0
Univ. of East	1	1
La Salle	0	1
St. Benilde	0	2
EAC	0	3

● *All games in first round*

FAVORED SAN BEDA PLAYED TRUE TO FORM EVEN AS Emilio Aguinaldo College hacked out another impressive win on the road late last week to stay in the upper half of the standings at the resumption of the Home and Away Invitational League.

The EAC Generals didn't disappoint their home fans by turning back the Ateneo Eagles, 64-57, while the SBC Red Lions bucked a hostile crowd to blast the College of St. Benilde Blazers, 70-57.

In women's basketball, Ateneo's Lady Eagles trounced the Lady Generals, 88-58, for their third straight win in the only home-and-away collegiate league backed by Adidas, the official outfitter, and Sunbolt, the official drink.

The Red Lions also rolled to their third straight triumph in the men's side, thanks to another inspired game by starters Roger Menor, who finished with 18 points, and the hulking Jay-R Taganas, who had 10.

Carmelo Manding led the Blazers with 11 as they dropped to 1-2 in a tie with the University of the Eest Warriors and the La Salle Archers.

Gester Ebuen led three other Generals with double-digit scores against the badly outclassed Eagles. Ebuen topscored with 16, John Ronald Valderama chipped in 13, and Nichole Hubalde and Mark Du added 10 apiece.

Treena Limgenco and Maria Angelica Barracoso tossed in 12 points apiece, while Katrina Quimpo and Annemarie Gomez had 11 each for the Lady Eagles against the Lady Generals.

Magnolia lives on for title match

By Jasmine W. Payo

MAGNOLIA'S Kelly Williams follows up his own miss off a Rain or Shine double team of Marvin Ortiguerra and Jay-R Reyes during their game yesterday. EDWIN BACASMAS

MAGNOLIA STARS KELLY WILLIAMS AND ARWIND Santos were in the spotlight for most of Game 4 yesterday but it was RJ Rizada who finally got the job done for the Wizards.

Rizada scored back-to-back baskets in the final minute of overtime to lift Magnolia to a 61-57 decision of Rain or Shine that forged a sudden death for the PBL Heroes Cup championship at the San Andres gym.

The Wizards again drew stellar games from Santos, who logged in 12 points, seven rebounds and two blocks, and Williams, who finished with 11 markers, 16 boards and four swats in the low-scoring game.

But it was Rizada who ended up as the hero, scoring four key points in the crunch as Magnolia averted elimination for the second straight game and extended the title series into a winner-take-all Game 5 on Thursday.

Rizada finished with a team-high 15 points capped by a follow-up of a Santos miss and a breakaway layup as Magnolia pressed its bid to become only the second team in league history to battle back from a 0-2 deficit in a best-of-five series.

Rizada's layup came after Jeff Chan had knocked the ball away from veteran Rain or Shine guard Eugene Tan. The 6-foot-1 enforcer broke the game's last deadlock at 57, going into the final 32.8 seconds.

Santos then extended the lead by nailing two free throws after grabbing the rebound off Most Valuable Player Jojo Tangkay's airball from three-point range.

Former pro Marvin Ortiguerra sent the game into overtime for the Painters by scoring on a layup for 48-all, with 14.9 seconds left.

Santos hit two free throws and then gave the Wizards a 48-46 lead with a triple from just above the keyhole.

"We just know how to handle the pressure this time," said Magnolia coach Koy Banal.

Tangkay paced the Painters with 18 points and Ortiguerra added 16, but Junjun Cabatu, hero of the first two games of the series for Rain or Shine, was held to six markers.

Tanduay was the first and only team to blow a 2-0 lead in a best-of-five title series, bowing to the Leo Isaac-coached Dr. J team late in 1998, just a couple of months before the Rhum Masters, then bannered by Eric Menk, made the jump to the Philippine Basketball Association.

GAME THURSDAY
(San Andres Gym)
3 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Magnolia (Game 5 Finals)

The scores:

MAGNOLIA 61—Rizada 15, Santos 12, Williams 11, Chan 8, Valenzuela 5, Jones 5, Misolas 3, Isip 2, Angeles 0, Co 0, Bombeo 0.

RAIN OR SHINE 57—Tangkay 18, Ortiguerra 16, Cabatu 6, Malabanan 5, Sagad 4, Enrile 4, Tan 2, Ryes 2, Sta. Maria 0.

Quarters: 15-8, 23-19, 34-32, 48-48, 61-57 (OT)

Sir, there's a Cubano in the house

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

BEFORE THEY RUN OUT OF TIME, OUR amateur boxing godfathers must heed this little advice: There's a Cubano in the house.

His name is Honorato Espinosa, based since last year in Kidapawan, North Cotabato, where he has been quietly but very effectively putting in place an amateur boxing program for the League of Provinces of the Philippines, which counts as members over 80 of the country's provincial governors.

We find it our duty to make this announcement after learning that the bid by the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines to rehire Cuban Raul Fernandez Liranza to coach the national boxing team in the Doha Asian Games this year has failed again.

For the record, it was Liranza who trained and goaded Onyok Velasco to a silver medal finish in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

It was, however, the same Liranza who proved a dismal failure in the Sydney Olympics four years later where the RP boxing team he coached failed to land even a single pop soda bottle crown.

* * *

Our amateur boxing bosses must've been terribly infatuated with Liranza, noted to be a severe drillmaster who, unfortunately, proved no match to the technically superior Juan Fontanils, the Cubano credited for having brought to Thailand boxing gold medals from the last three Olympiads in Atlanta, Sydney and Athens.

Fontanils, who has since been recalled to the Cuban national team, had openly belittled a team being coached by Liranza which the Thais, while fielding only their Class B boxers, overpowered in the 1999 Southeast Asian Games in Brunei.

After the Thai conquest of the RP simonpures in Brunei, Fontanils offered a scathing insight into the worth of the RP amateur boxers.

He said Filipinos were strong physically, but basically brainless.

To clarify, it meant that the RP team, drilled to near physical perfection by coach Lizanza, was technically inferior, if not entirely hollow.

This glaring flaw was again confirmed in the Sydney Olympics, where Liranza, to repeat, called the shots for the RP amateur boxers.

* * *

Well, this is not to again state the main fault of our amateur boxing system which continues to anchor its program on recycling.

Nothing wrong with reinstating winners, but the poor practice of the Abap to resuscitate failed fighters and enter them again in major international contests should have been remedied a long time ago.

Now, they also want to inflict this tested failure on the RP amateur boxing coaching staff itself?

It's no longer funny that, despite the failure of Liranza to deliver, the big bosses at the Abap would not even bother to shop for a better deal.

For the record, Liranza had failed to show up at the airport last year where he was supposed to be fetched by the Abap president, who continued to beg for his services.

Maybe the no-show was already a way of sending across the message that the Philippine amateur boxing team should try its luck with a different mentor.

Yesterday, the final word came out. Cuban Ambassador to the Philippines Jorge Rey Jimenez said that Liranza would not be able to return and train the country's amateur boxers for the Doha Asian Games and the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

* * *

Meanwhile, other replacements are being considered. Named as possible RP coaches were Cuba's Julian Gonzales Cedeno, Julio Mena Torres, Pedro Luis Benitez and Sarbello Fuentes Fernandez.

Nothing wrong with that. Of course, we also have no idea if these suggested substitutions are tested winners.

On this note, may we humbly suggest that the Abap hierarchy try to open its eyes?

Repeat: There's a Cuban in the house.

Honorato Espinosa, who was personally picked by the amiable Cuban ambassador to the Philippines, should be able to cure the glaring technical lack of Filipino amateur boxers in international tournaments.

Gov. Manny Piñol of North Cotabato, main cog behind the boxing program of the League of Provinces of the Philippines, has told us he would be more than willing to offer Espinosa's services to the RP team.

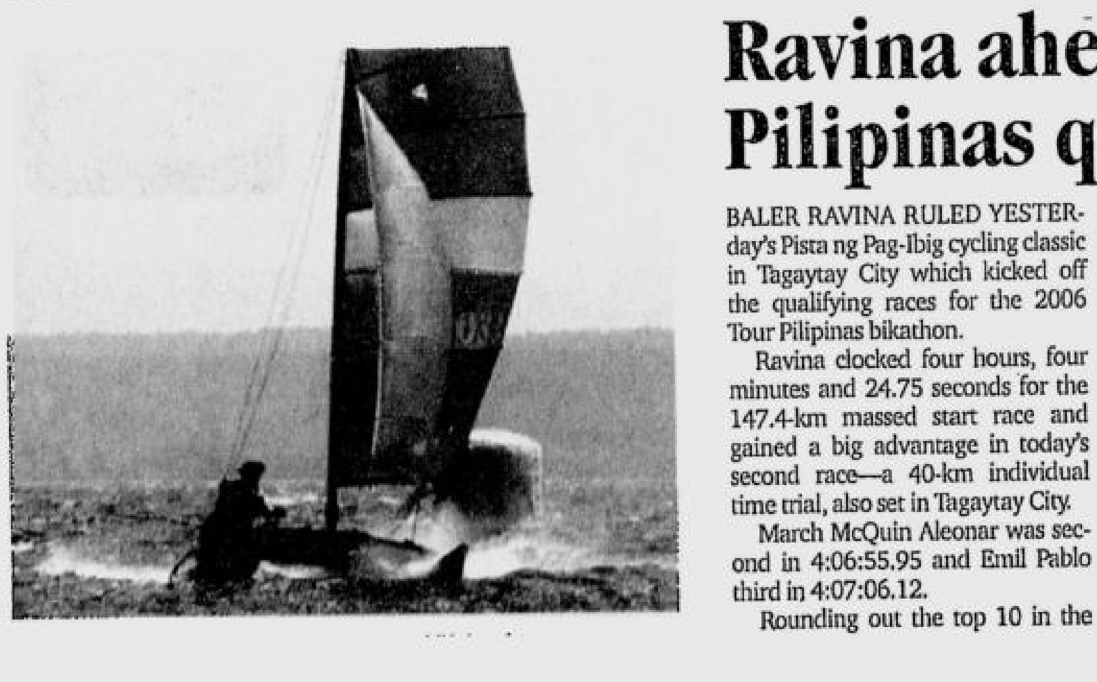
Espinosa, in case the Abap is not aware, is credited with having won for Cuba its first Olympic boxing gold in Munich 1972. He has gone on to land a total of 27 gold medals for his country from major international competitions.

He had also under him the great Raul Fernandez Liranza and Juan Fontanils himself, main architect of Thailand's success in Olympic boxing.

Can't the Abap at least call in Señor Espinosa for a meeting?

Or is the Abap afraid this tested Cuban maestro would order the staging of a national elimination box-off for slots in the national team?

HOBIE NATIONALS: Charlie Clement and Norman Jaravata of Team Maldita (in photo) topped the 9th Mobile 1 Hobie 16 Nationals held at the Taal Lake Yacht Club in Talisay, Batangas. The duo also topped the Open Championship which included six teams from Australia, Saipan, Alaska, the US and Hong Kong. The Nationals, presented by iPOD, MicroWarehouse, Rudy Project and Soluziona, is a prelude to the 7th Philippine Hobie Challenge this month.



Ravina ahead in Tour Pilipinas qualifying

BALER RAVINA RULED YESTERday's Pista ng Pag-Ibig cycling classic in Tagaytay City which kicked off the qualifying races for the 2006 Tour Pilipinas bikathon.

Ravina clocked four hours, four minutes and 24.75 seconds for the 147.4-km massed start race and gained a big advantage in today's second race—a 40-km individual time trial, also set in Tagaytay City.

March McQuin Aleonar was second in 4:06:55.95 and Emil Pablo third in 4:07:06.12.

Rounding out the top 10 in the race hosted by Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino and supervised by the Philippine National Cycling Association were 2003 Tour champion Arnel Quirimit, Eusebio Quinones, Reynaldo Navarro, Joel Calderon, Rene Esteban, Gary Apolinar and Bryant Sepinio.

Meanwhile, Jaybob Pagnanawon, son of former Tour champion Rolando; Mark Julius Bonzo, son of another Tour ex-titlist Romeo; and Ryan Angeles finished 1-2-3 in the 21-km junior massed start race of a cycling festival organized by Tolentino.

An overdose of basketball

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

READER BILL Amador once said in a treatise on Philippine sports that a Filipino athlete has the capacity to beat the world's No. 1 player in tennis and that a Filipino football team could be in the World Cup and be a contender in regional meets, too. He can also be a contender in other sports where height is not a factor.

"We have built a popular, highly financed basketball team, idolized the stars, yet our strongest PBA selection cannot hope to beat even the weakest NBA team," he said.

Amador could be right.

The late sportscaster *nonpareil* Willie Hernandez started basketball exposure on radio, covering the Micaa and NCAA games in the 1950s in his inimitable way, giving his legions of listeners a reason to like the sport. Then the television coverage of basketball games followed starting in the 1960s. PBA games are now being telecast in one channel, with the PBL, NCAA and UAAP games aired in another. NBC games are also telecast on still another channel.

Radio and TV broadcasts of basketball have been without letup. Basketball is now embedded in the people's subconscious. It is not hard to notice the game's popular appeal. All over the country, you see basketball courts even in small streets in urban centers. In the provinces, young and old play basketball in town plazas, vacant lots and even in beaches.

Amador recalled that, one time, while he was driving his car along a side street in Sampaloc, Manila, he almost hit a boy of about 10 years old, who came out dashing from his house and onto the street as fast as the speedy (Yoyong) Martirez, dribbling like (Johnny) Abarrientos and executing a layup like Samboy Lim. How did this boy learn that? Naturally from the radio-TV telecast of basketball games on primetime slots.

To stop this fanaticism, Amador sought a ban on the TV-radio exposure of basketball games, while stressing—lest he be misunderstood—that he was not proposing a ban on the playing of basketball.

There is no question that basketball is the Filipinos' No. 1 sport, but sports officials should be reminded that its importance should not be exaggerated.

For example, even without basketball in the medal race, the Philippines won the overall crown of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games by garnering 113 gold medals. Basketball was not missed.

Filipino athletes in other sports had also performed pretty well. Felicisimo "Mighty Mite" Ampon was once the toast of the tennis world, Haydee Coloso was Asia's former swimming queen, Mona Sulaiman was tops in track and field, Gabriel "Flash" Elorde was pro boxing's hero and amateur boxer Anthony Villanueva won the country's first silver medal in the Olympics, accomplishing the feat in the 1964 Tokyo Games.

Then we have Eugene Torre, Asia's first chess grandmaster; bowling icon Paeng Nepomuceno, sprints champion Lydia de Vega, amateur boxing's Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco, who won the country's second silver medal in the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996; billiards great Efren "Bata" Reyes and golfers Frankie Miñoza and Jennifer Rosales.

If we remove basketball from the people's consciousness, the country might produce more heroes in other sports where height is not might.

I have no quarrel with our obsession with basketball, but we should accept the fact that tall players have the decided advantage over the Filipino cagers who are not meant to be genetically tall. Our tallest and best center at present is 6-foot-10 Asi Taulava of Talk 'N Text, yet he is much shorter compared with his counterparts from China and Korea who are seven footers or taller.

As Honorio Ybera, a reader based in Mexico City, asked: "Why do we continue to glorify basketball despite the fact that the Philippines has never qualified for the Olympic Games since 1972? Why do we continue to glorify our basketball stars who have not beaten the Chinese in the Asian Games?"

We must realize we have no chance in it, Ybera added. So why are we insisting on a sport that promises us nothing?

Balikbayan golf tour tees off

LOS ANGELES—FILIPINO IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR families kick off their unique six-leg golf tournament today at Alabang Golf and Country Club. A contingent of 90 players from all over the United States and from Papua New Guinea are entered in the tournament that will take them from Alabang to Club Malarayat in Lipa City on Feb. 14, The Orchard in Dasmariñas, Cavite (Feb. 16); Eagle Ridge, also in Silang, Cavite (Feb. 17); Canlubang in Laguna (Feb. 20) and at the Tagaytay Midlands in Tagaytay City (Feb. 21). The Friendly Members (FM) Golf Tour 2006 is holding the tourney with businessman Fortune Q. Mabasa as chief organizer and Ricky L. Cobankiat, bureau chief of Tribune USA—one of the largest Filipino newspapers in Los Angeles—as Manila coordinator. It is backed by Philippine Airlines and Century Park-Sheraton hotel.

Wack Wack, Riviera up in Ladies Fed League

STANDINGS (win-draw-loss-game points)

BLUE GROUP: Wack Wack 3-0-0-6, Highlands 2-0-1-5, Orchard 1-0-3-2, Northwoods 1-0-1-2, Southwoods 0-0-2-0

GOLD GROUP: Riviera 2-0-0-6, Sta. Elena 1-0-1-2, Forest Hills 0-1-1-1, Alabang 0-1-1-1

RIVIERA AND WACK WACK POSTED IMpressive victories to pace their respective divisions, even as defending champion Tagaytay Highlands gained another win at the resumption of the Ladies Federation Golf League in various courses recently.

Riviera gained an extra point for the second straight match after a 2.5-0.5 trashing of a fancied Sta. Elena squad that allowed the Silang, Cavite-based team to pull away in the Gold Group with 6 points.

The Rivierans had earlier swept Alabang, 3-0, in their debut. League rules give a bonus point to a team that wins a duel with 2.5 or 3 points.

Wack Wack, meanwhile, remains undefeated in three matches.

The Mandaluyong squad followed up a big win over Tagaytay Highlands in its first game with victories over Orchard and Manila Southwoods to show the way in the Blue Group, also with 6 points.

Highlands was a point off Wack Wack on two wins and a loss following a 2-1 conquest of Orchard in an away game.

In the week's most exciting game, Forest Hills and Alabang battled to a 1.5-1.5 standoff in Antipolo. Forest Hills first won the high-low match but Alabang evened up matters in the aggregate. The deciding foursomes ended in a draw.

Record high for rounds at Eagle Ridge

THE EAGLE RIDGE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, the country's largest golf complex located in Gen. Trias, Cavite, reached a new milestone last month when it registered 16,118 golf rounds.

The new record is 2,027 rounds, or 14 percent, more than Eagle Ridge's previous high of 14,091 posted in the same month last year.

The new mark represents an average of 4,029 rounds in each of the four championship courses of the giant club designed by legends Greg Norman, Isao Aoki, Nick Faldo and Andy Dye.

Eagle Ridge project director Wini Gob said that rounds played by members accounted for 28 percent of the new record.

"Things are getting better not just in Eagle Ridge but in many other golf clubs, and we hope to sustain this in the coming months," Gob, an engineer, said.

Eagle Ridge, a joint venture project of Sta. Lucia Realty and Alsons Lands Corp., will host on Friday several *balikbayan* groups from the United States and other cities around the world who are taking advantage of the perfect golf weather.

It also has scheduled its monthly tournament for members on Feb. 18 at its Faldo course.

Viloria fight pulls Manny, Erik into opposite corners

MANNY PACQUIAO AND ERIK Morales will be on opposite corners again when Brian Viloria and Jose Antonio Aguirre slug it out for the World Boxing Council (WBC) light flyweight crown this Saturday (Sunday in Manila) in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Filipino ring icon, who gave Morales a terrible beating in their rematch, also in Las Vegas last month, will give the blow-by-blow account of Viloria's first title defense to Filipino viewers along with veteran boxing commentator Quinito Henson.

Morales is also expected on fight night at the Aladdin Resort and Casino being the manager of Aguirre.

Viloria (18-0, 12 KOs) won the title from another Mexican, Eric Ortiz, whom he dispatched in the first round.

VILORIA (right): Pacquiao on his side

Aguirre (33-4-1, 20 KOs), a proud Mexican himself, is eyeing his second world title. He was WBC minimumweight champ for nearly four years.

Their fight will be aired simulcast on Solar Sports and RPN-9 starting at 10 a.m. There will also be live viewing on selected SM cinemas nationwide.

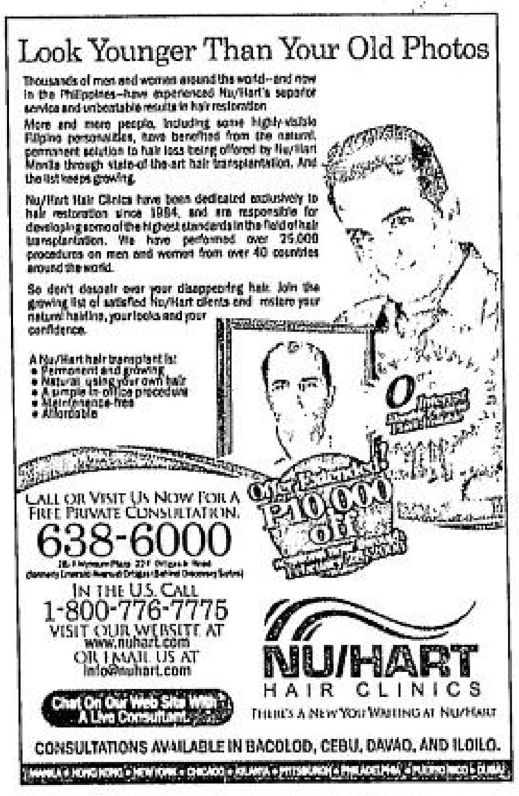
The Viloria-Aguirre clash is an undercard to the World Boxing Organization (WBO) welterweight title fight between reigning champ Antonio Margarito and Manuel Gomez.

Viloria, who admits to being a fan of Pacquiao, said he is drawing inspiration from his idol's recent success.

"His (Pacquiao's) victory over Morales inspired me to fight well and show the world the stuff of Filipinos," Viloria said.

The fighter called "Hawaiian Punch" was on deck with Henson to annotate Pacquiao's recent victory over Morales.

But for Pacquiao, it's not merely a case of returning the favor. "I have long wanted to analyze a fight on TV," he said.



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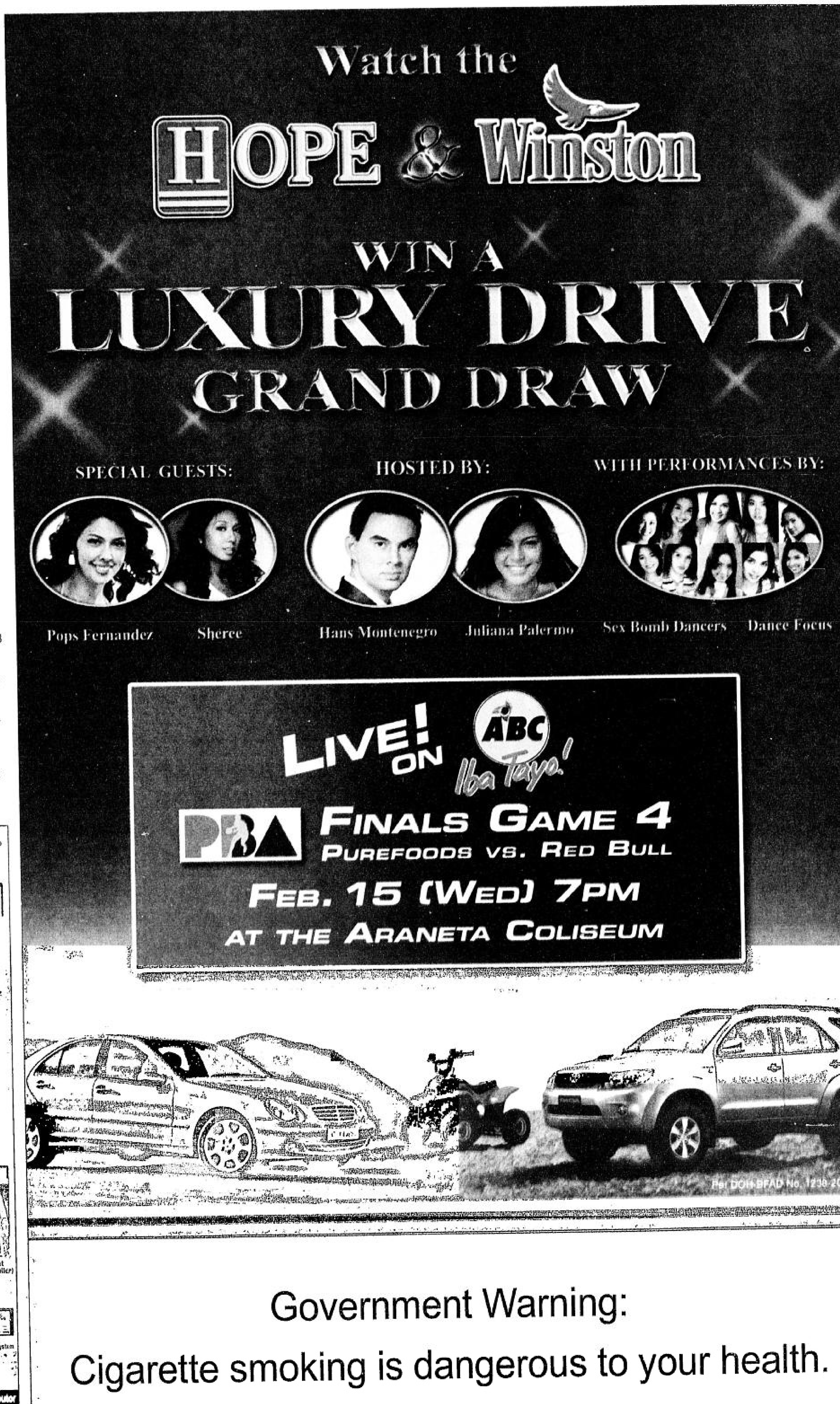

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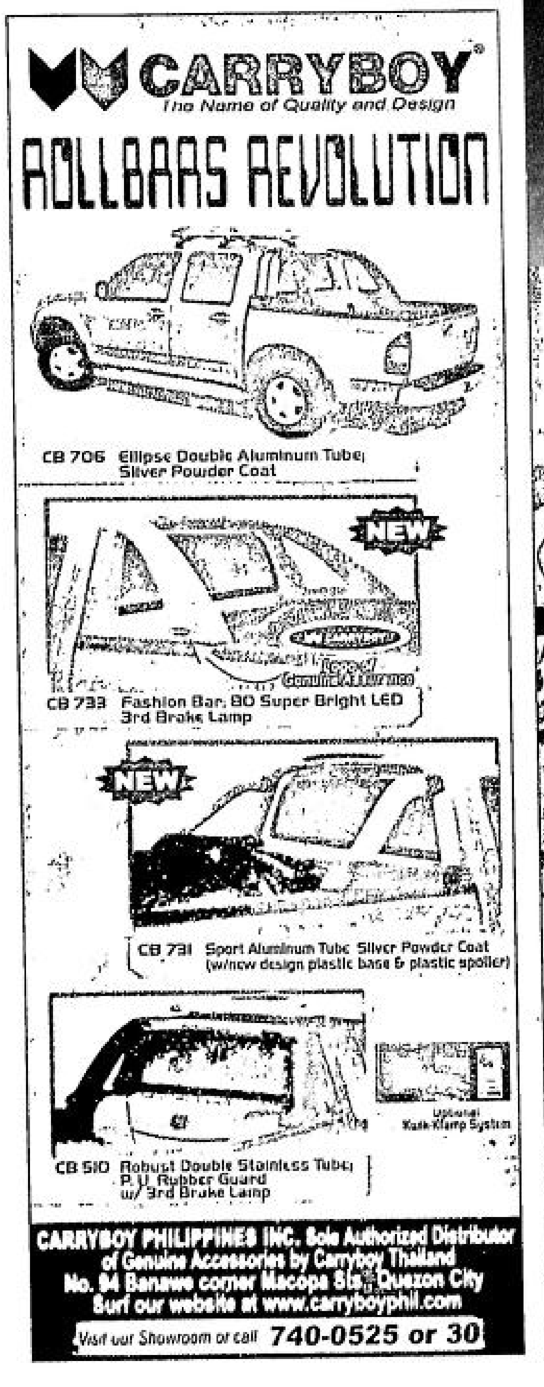

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Espiritu gains in Langkawi

MELAKA, MALAYSIA—VICTOR ESPIRITU POSTED an impressive 10th place finish in the 20-km individual time trial race here and moved up from 12th to No. 11 after Stage 9 of the Asian category of the TM Le Tour de Langkawi here Saturday.

Espiritu, the Tour's former Asian king and one of the three survivors of the Pagcor-Casino Filipino cycling squad, checked in 57.31 seconds behind Koji Fukushima of Japan, who topped the penultimate stage in 21 minutes, 14.21 seconds.

Erstwhile 10th-running Ali Ahmad Falani of Malaysia settled for 22nd place and fell to 12th overall.

Espiritu trails another Malaysian, Ahman Fauzan, by a mere 24 seconds going into the last stage, a criterium race in Kuala Lumpur Sunday.

Filipinos Albert Primero limped home last in the field of 26 and slid from 22nd to 24th in the Asian overall race. Bernard Luzon, on the other hand, finished 18th and dropped to 23rd overall.

SPORTSWATCH

Tagaytay mayor NBC EVP

THE NATIONAL Basketball Conference (NBC) has named Tagaytay Mayor and Batang Tagaytay team owner Bambol Tolentino as the league's executive vice president. A staunch anti-drug campaigner and supporter of various other sports like chess, cycling and boxing, Tolentino is expected to strengthen NBC's regional grassroots development program. NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla is happy that the youthful mayor, who was his batchmate at San Beda College, accepted the appointment. Tolentino is hosting the fourth leg of the Nature's Spring-NBC pre-season series on Feb. 14-18.

NCA derby at Roligon

THE NATIONAL Cockers Association will hold a special 7-cock derby, hosted by Ruel Ricafort, JV Magsaysay, E. Santos and the Firefly Group, today and on Wednesday at the 15,000-seat Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque. Regarded as the biggest and most durable organization of civic-minded sportsmen, the NCA has four scholars at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna, and 12 others at the Miriam Computer School in Quezon City.

55 tiffs in Makati 3-cocker

THE FIRST of 55 fights in a special 3-cock derby at the Makati Coliseum kicks off at 5 p.m. today with B-Meg Derby Ace as exclusive sponsor. The guaranteed prize is P150,000, said host Amor Salvanera who will be assisted by the WTJ Group of promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co. Last week, the Gary 3-cock Feb. 15 bet emerged as solo champion from a field of 40 entries to win the top prize of P200,000. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475. The WTJ will also present another 3-cocker at the same venue on Wednesday with a cash pot of P200,000. Entry fee is P5,500.

GCAP cocker race heats up

THE BATTLE for the Cocker of the Year title heats up anew on Wednesday as the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-Cock Derby sizzles at the San Juan Coliseum. Main sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Currently locked in first place are three entries with eight points each: JT Emerald of Jun Topacio, Papa Sta. Cruz of Benjie Lim and Pol Estrellado and Sagupaan Complexor 3000 of Patrick Antonio. The derby will feature more than 70 fights and will start at 5 p.m.

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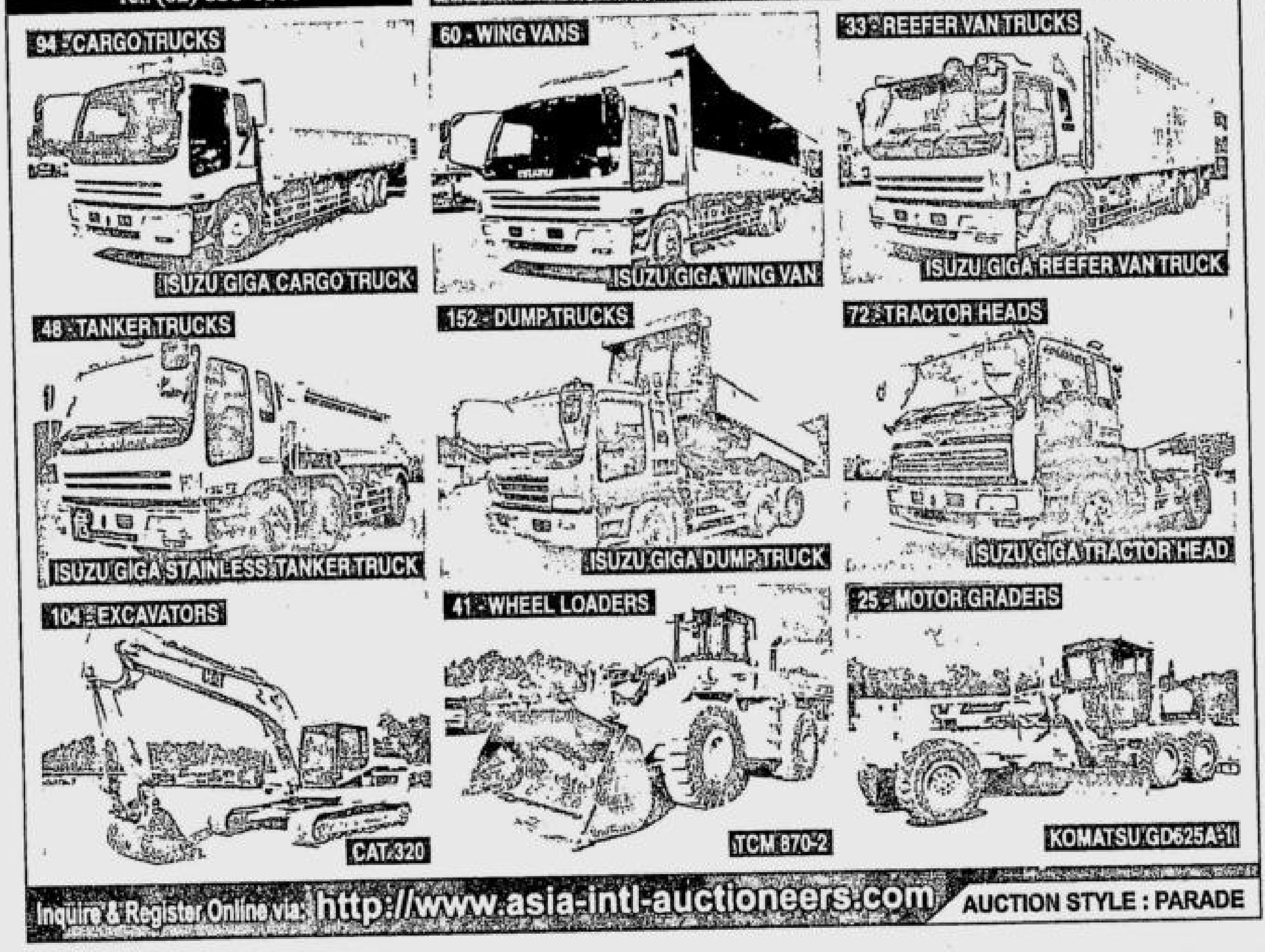
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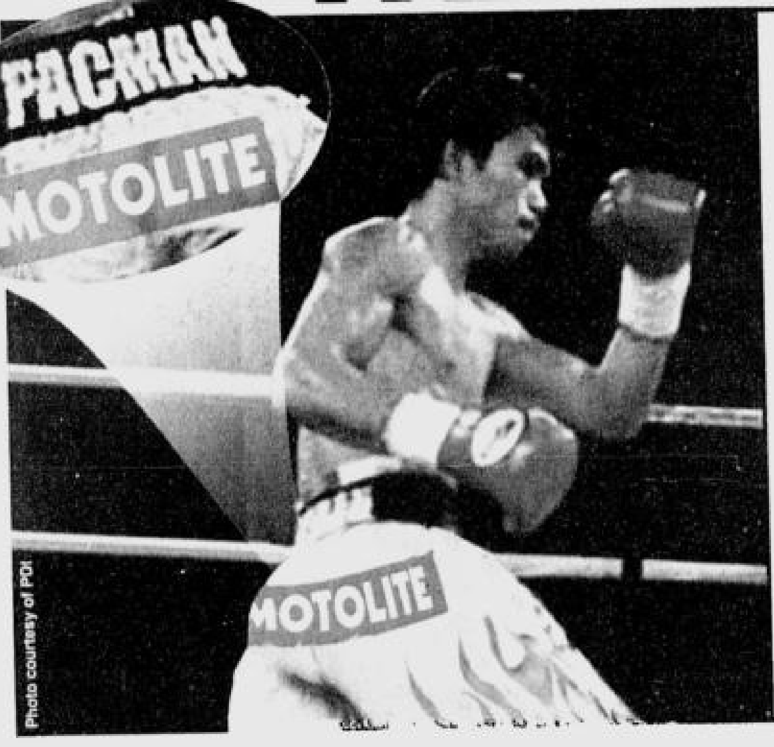
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Photo courtesy of PDI

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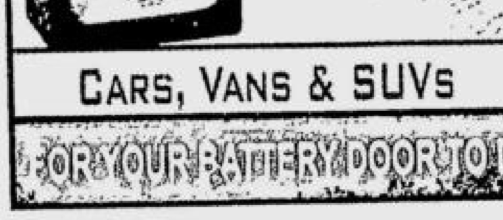
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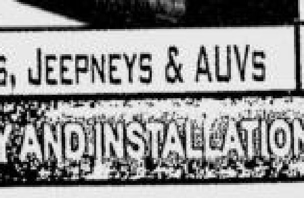

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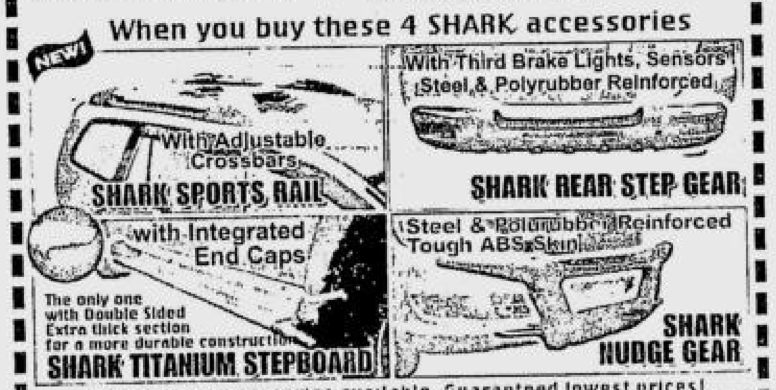
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ENTERTAINMENT

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JOEY DE LEON in varying degrees of hurt, on national television: "I could never say anything so insensitive.

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'Eat' producers take Joey's side

By Marinel R. Cruz

THERE WILL BE NO sanctions for Joey de Leon.

"Of course we understand what he went through. When we asked him to avoid talking about the issue, we only wanted to protect him," said TV producer Malou Choa-Fagar.

INQUIRER Entertainment had sought her reaction to statements made by comedian-TV host Joey de Leon on the Saturday show biz talk program, "StarTalk."

According to Joey, producers of the variety game show "Eat... Bulaga!"—where he is one of the main hosts—on GMA 7 earlier advised him not to comment on rumors resulting from the Feb. 4 stampede at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig.

Seventy-four people died and about 500 were injured among the 30,000 who had turned up at the arena to join the first anniversary celebration of "Bulaga's" rival show on ABS-CBN, "Wowowee!"

Choa-Fagar is an executive of Television and Production Exponents Inc. (Tape), which produces "Eat... Bulaga!"

Text messages circulated after the stampede alleged that Joey told viewers of his program that same day: "*Dito na kayo; mga buhay ang tao dito* (Stick with us; people here stay alive)."

"*Pinigilan ko po ang sarili ko ng isang linggo. Pinagbawalan ako ng* 'Eat... Bulaga!' *Pinagbigyan ko sila. Mahirap pala* (I kept to myself for a week. I was asked not to comment on it. It's difficult)," a tearful Joey said on "StarTalk." "*Pagalitan n'yo na ako dahil sinuway ko kayo; tanggalin n'yo na ako sa programa. Sarili ko ito, pinagtatanggol ko* (Scold me, fire

'EAT'/A2-2

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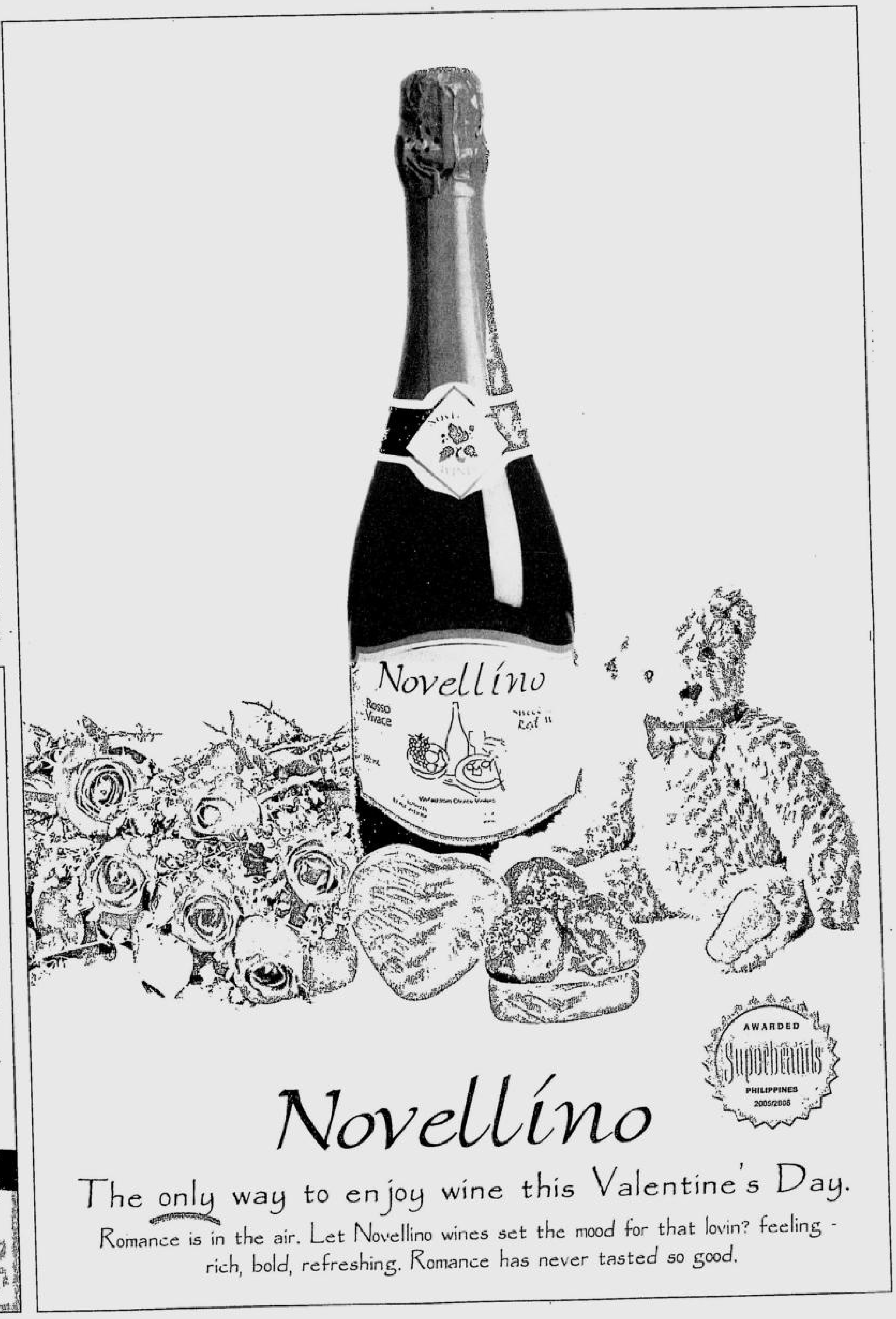

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'Eat' producers take Joey's side

From page A2-1

me... I have to defend myself)."

Joey vehemently denied having said anything so insensitive.

"*Napakawalanghiya ko naman kung ginawa ko 'yun* (I'm not that shameless)," he stressed, and then challenged his critics to present proof that he taunted "Wowowee!" and ABS-CBN. "*Kung may mailalabas kayo... hindi n'yo na ako makikita sa TV kahit kailan, kahit saan* (If you can prove it, I will never be seen again on television)."

Joey was supported by Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) Chair Marissa Laguardia, who said she "did not hear Joey utter such words" when she reviewed the Feb. 4 episode of "Eat... Bulaga!"

"I myself received such a text message. I also got several calls from viewers wanting to know if it was true," said Laguardia. "That's why I checked."

Joey cried the most when he said he decided to speak up after his daughter Jocas called from the United States, saying he should.

But his parting shot was vintage Joey de Leon: "*Nakikiramay ako sa mga naulila. Pwede kong sabihin sa inyo ... sa langit, wala pong* raffle ticket *. Dire-diretso [lang] kayo.*"

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1	FUN WITH DICK & JANE	1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00	PG-13
2	FIREWALL	1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00	PG-13
3	MUNICH	1:05, 4:20, 7:40, 10:50	R-13
4	NEW WORLD	11:55, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:00	PG-13

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MUNICH R13 12:30,3:40,6:50,10:00	DERAILED R13 1:10,3:30	FUN WITH DICK AND JANE PG13 1:35,3:45,5:55, 8:05,10:15
FEARLESS PG13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	NEW WORLD PG13 1:20,4:20,7:20,10:20	FIRE WALL PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15

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Cinema	Title	Schedule	Rating
3	NEW WORLD	10:30,1:30,4:30, 7:30, 10:30	PG13
4	FEARLESS - SNEAK PREVIEWS	11:00,1:15,3:30, 5:45,8:00,10:20	PG13
5	FIREWALL	11:40 , 2:20 ,5:00, 7:40 , 10:20	PG13

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MUSIC MUSEUM	FEBRUARY 10,11 &13	VINA M. , RACHEL A. & GENEVA C.	8:30PM
	February 15, 2006	CANDY PANGILINAN	8:00PM
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MTRCB. PG-13
12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

② FIREWALL
MTRCB PG-13
12 00 2 30 5 00 7 30 10 00

③ MUNICH
MTRCB . R-13
11:15, 2:20, 5:25, 9:00

④ FEARLESS
MTRCB PG-13
12:00, 2:30, 5.00, 7:30, 10:00

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MTRCB. PG-13 1 30. 4 20. 7 10. 10 00
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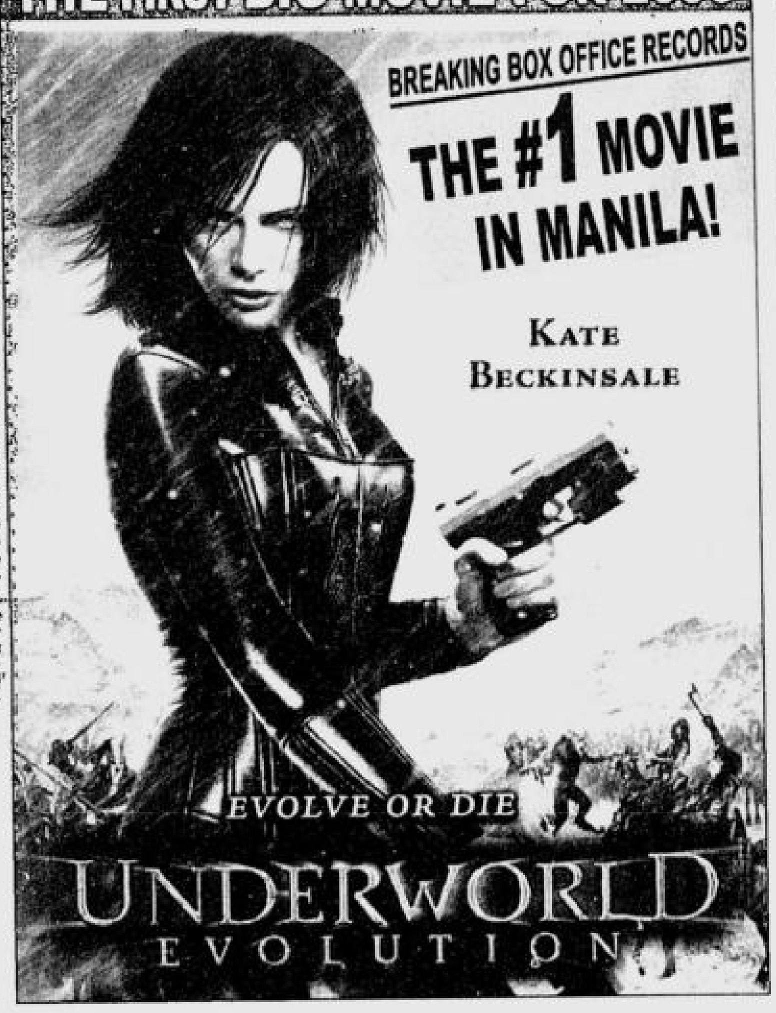

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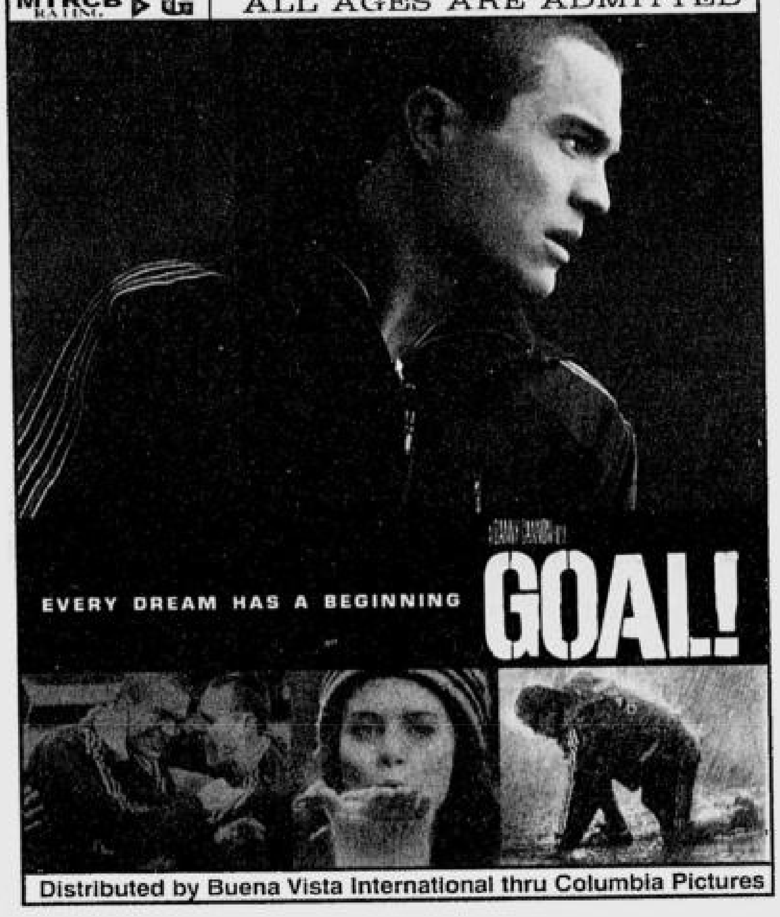
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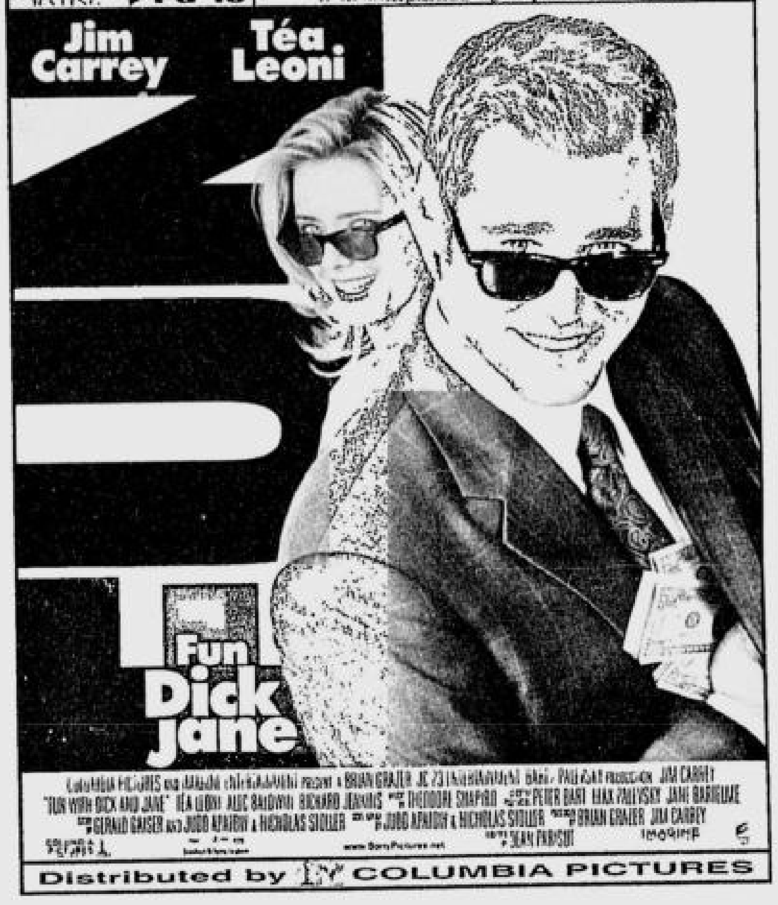
Jim Carrey
Téa Leoni
Fun with Dick and Jane

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Monday, February 13, 2006

Find out who will be the next... American Idol
ON YOUR IDOL NETWORK ABC Iba Tayo!
Wednesday & Thursday 10PM

Provided by ClickTheCity.com

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ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)		Speed		TNA Impact		Sentro	Friends	Guinness Book Of Record		Fear Factor		Big News	Toloo TV		Billboard On-Air	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Gulong Ng Palad	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Pinoy Big Brother	Vietnam Rose	Forbidden Love	OK Final Whatever			Insider
AXN		SWAT Police			Worst Case Scenario		E Buzz	Lost		24		Max Exposure (Season II)		The 4400 (Season 2)		Las Vegas		Las Vegas	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Tom & Jerry Show		Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Kalyehera				Got 2 Believe				May Isang Pamilya				Mano Po				Kailangan Kita	
Cinemax		Dead Canaries			Poodle Springs			Greedy (6:15 PM)				Pterodactyl			How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days				Patriot Games
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Discovery Channel				Monster Garage		Stick Fights & Lip Plates		I Survived		Wild Discovery		Kamikaze In Color		Man Made Marvels		I Survived		New Detectives	
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-lukative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Black Hole High	So Little Time	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '04 Int'l Challenge of Champs USA		World Pool Masters '01		Winter X Games Classic		Extreme Programming Sports Mania		In The Driver's Seat	Sportscenter Asia	Nfl's Greatest Moments	Afc/Nfc Pro Bowl						Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Project Runway		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Project Runway		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		ET Weekend		Joan Of Arcadia	
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion Encore	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Sunday Night With (Encore) Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Threshold Of Hope		Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Defending Life	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Fox Report Sunday		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royale Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace/Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi		
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Doc Martin		Dog Gone Love (3:50 PM)			Who's The Boss? II	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		I Do But I Don't			McLeod's Daughters IV		Strong Medicine
HBO	Bachelorman			Wilder Days (4:15 PM)				Going For Broke			Hard Target			Wimbledon			American Pie: The Wedding		
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Retro TV	Good Take	Travel	Global Family Songs	Japan Video Topics		Global Family Songs	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Bottomline		Afterburn		X-Men Evolution	Beat The Geeks	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box			
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! Extra Jackie Collins Presents: Hitched In Hollywood		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Living Space	Style Star	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines	Rockola	MTV Ask	Chart Attack		Viva La Bam	Pop Inc		MTV Hits		Making The Movie: Aeon Flux	The Life & Rhymes of 50 Cent	Massive	Get Spotted	TRL		The 70's House	Wild N' Out	Homecoming	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXILOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten			Mobile MYX Top Picks	Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	Hidden Worlds		Dangerous Encounters		Wildlife Diary	Totally Wild	Top 5 - Mysterious Universe		Wow!		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Treasure Fleet: The Adventures Of Zheng He		Hornets, A Sting In The Tale	
NBN		Value Vision		Value Vision		Teledyaryo	Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Bilang Na Ang Oras Mo				Dugo Sa Pisngi Ng Buwan				Markang Bungo 2				Mayor Dela Rosa Story				Venus (Diosa Ng Kagandahan)
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Striker Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	H3O Hahaha :Over		News On Q	Lupa Ng Katotohanan		MINT (Music Interactive)	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Score Tactics	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Simple Life 2	Cargo For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports		WTA 2005 Tour Champs by LA Round Robin			GWS 05-2006	Greatest Classics				Sagupaan		NBA Game Bulls @ Clippers					Sportsdesk	Swatch Acapulco Men's Finals	
Sports Plus		This Is The PGA Tour		Golf Today	Inside the PGA	Ultimate Fighting Championship				Arena Football League						AT&T Pebble Beach Nat'l Pro-Am Final			
Star Movies		Found (3:15 PM)			Riding In Cars With Boys					Mrs. Doubtfire (6:55 PM)				When Harry Met Sally			Six Days Seven Nights		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends (Series 10)	My Wife And Kids	Everybody Loves Raymond	Frasier (Series 8)		Monk (Series 4)		Friends (Series 10)	My Wife And Kids
Studio 23		Yugioh Duel Monster						Get Backers	Spirits	Wazzup Wazzup	The Swan Season 2		Charmed (8:20 PM)	Lost (9:10 PM)		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

RUSTOM Padilla: frighteningly thin

One night in the PBB fish bowl

By Paul Daza
Contributor

A RECENT EPISODE OF ABS-CBN'S "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition" was a surprisingly engaging, heart-tugging viewing experience. With the pall of the Ultra tragedy hanging over the network, and the show's use of certain elements earlier used in GMA 7's "30 Days"—a reality show about has-been actors aching for a comeback—there were some doubts that ABS-CBN could capture lightning in a bottle twice.

Yes, there had been some curiosity about who made it to Kuya's guest list, but would viewers want to make the show a nightly habit? When the roster was announced during a welcome party at the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard, many must have gasped on seeing that the new housemates included sexy actresses not known for mincing words, a bleached and frighteningly thin Rustom Padilla, and an athlete with a mechanical leg.

With such a cast, how could anyone resist sampling the show at least once?

REVIEW

What made the earlier celebrity-free Pinoy Big Brother so compelling to watch was that it put a bunch of ordinary Pinoys in a fish bowl for 100 days and required them to carry out tasks that would test their social skills, creativity, ingenuity, and physical prowess—all for the promise of taking home millions of pesos in cash and other prizes.

Would the show's concept work with celebrities, who are used to living in a fish bowl anyway? As such, wouldn't there be something less real about their behavior?

Remaining doubts about the show's entertainment value very likely vanished during last Thursday's PBB, an edition that focused on surprises that Kuya and the housemates had lined up for unsuspecting birthday boy Christian Vasquez.

Whether it's because they are good actors or they weren't acting at all, nothing seemed phony or scripted about the way the housemates behaved. Internet chatroom favorite Budoy spoke emotionally to Big Brother about struggling artists whose works aren't appreciated, while "Kilabot ng Senado" Keanna Reeves looked genuinely frightened at the prospect of having to read a letter aloud. (A subtitle naughtily speculated that she was afraid the document she had to read was written in English. It wasn't.)

The episode's emotional highlight was surely the scene where Christian Vasquez sobbed uncontrollably in the confession room as he watched taped birthday greetings from his parents and two little boys, and reading letters they wrote him. Never before had the actor been so emotionally naked in any of his TV or movie roles, and it was easy to forget that Vasquez spent nearly every other scene in PBB topless, all the while being photographed.

It was almost anti-climactic when all his housemates greeted Vasquez with a birthday cake as he left the confession room—there was no way they could make him weep like his kids had done. But later, when all sat down to eat in the pool area, Kuya played a tape of Christian's sons reciting their 9 p.m. prayer, which their dad always recited with them. This time, it wasn't only Christian who cried; the other housemates did too, as did many

ONE NIGHT/ A2-4

> 'Kuya's' new guest list is intriguing, to say the least. How can anyone resist a peek?

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1 MUNICH • THX
12.45 3 50 6 55 10:00

2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
11:40 2.15 4.50 7.25 10 00

3 NEW WORLD
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

4 BLOODRAYNE
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

5 FUN with DICK and JANE
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

6 FIREWALL
12.00 2:30 5.00 7:30 10:00

7 FEARLESS
Sneak Preview

8 UNDERWORLD 2
12.50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

9 SAW 2
1:20 3.30 5:40 7:50 10:00

10 WALK THE LINE
1 40 4:20 7 00 9 40

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 FIREWALL
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50

2 SAW 2
12.00 1:40 3:20 5:00 6:40 8:20 10:00

3 FEARLESS
Sneak Preview

4 NEW WORLD
12:00 2:30 5 00 7:30 10:00

5 FUN with DICK and JANE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9.50

6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
12.30 2.50 5.10 7.30 10.00

7 MUNICH
12:30 3:35 6:40 9 50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 FEARLESS
Sneak Preview

2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
11.50 2:10 4.30 6.50 9.10

3 FUN with DICK and JANE
11:45 2.05 4.25 6 45 9.05

4 NEW WORLD
12:00 3.00 6:00 9 00

5 UNDERWORLD 2
12.00 2:15 4:30 6.45 9:00

6 MUNICH
11:10 2:30 5:50 9:10

7 FIREWALL
12:10 2 30 4 50 7:10 9:30

8 WALK THE LINE
12 45 3 30 6 15 9 00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

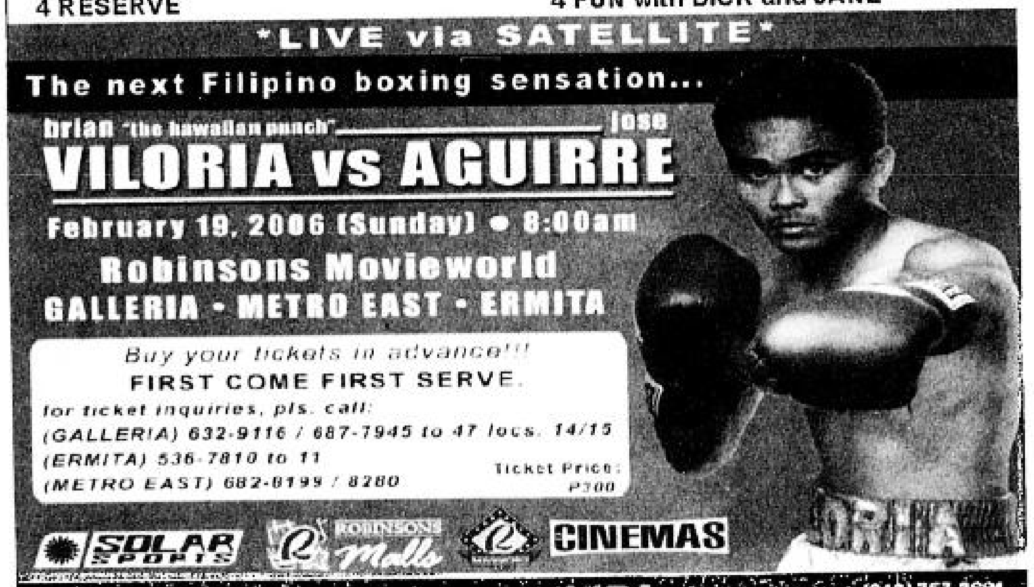
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 SAW 2
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FIREWALL
5 WALK THE LINE
6 FUN with DICK and JANE
7 FEARLESS Sneak Preview

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FIREWALL
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 NEW WORLD
2 FIREWALL
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FUN with DICK and JANE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2 FIREWALL
3 FUN with DICK and JANE
4 WALK THE LINE
5 UNDERWORLD 2

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1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 LITTLE MANHATTAN
3 HALF LIGHT
4 THE MAID
5 FUN with DICK and JANE

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 FIREWALL
2 HALF LIGHT
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FUN with DICK and JANE

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 FIREWALL
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 SAW 2
4 FUN with DICK and JANE

IMUS (046) 875-3836 (046) 471-8188

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 SAW 2
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 FIREWALL
5 FUN with DICK and JANE
6 FEARLESS Sneak Preview

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 ZATHURA
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN with DICK and JANE
4 FIREWALL
5 SAW 2
6 UNDERWORLD 2

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 FUN with DICK and JANE
2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 DERAILED
4 HALF LIGHT
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 THE MAID

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 FUN with DICK and JANE
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 THE MAID
6 HALF LIGHT

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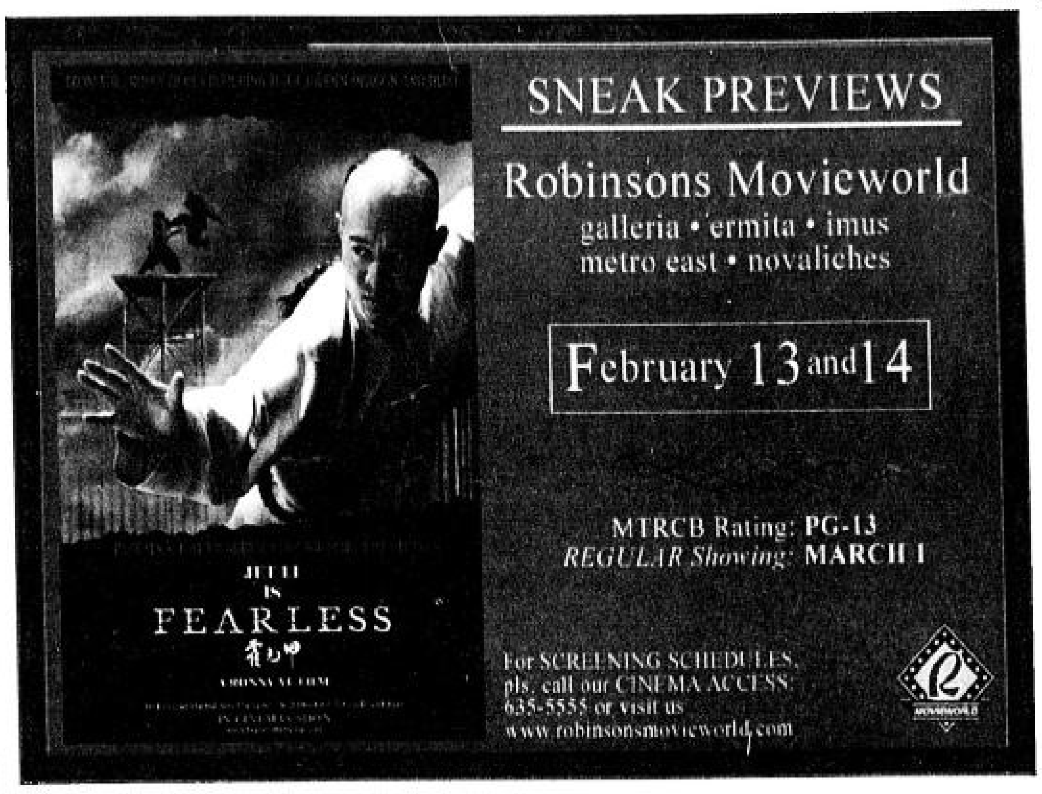
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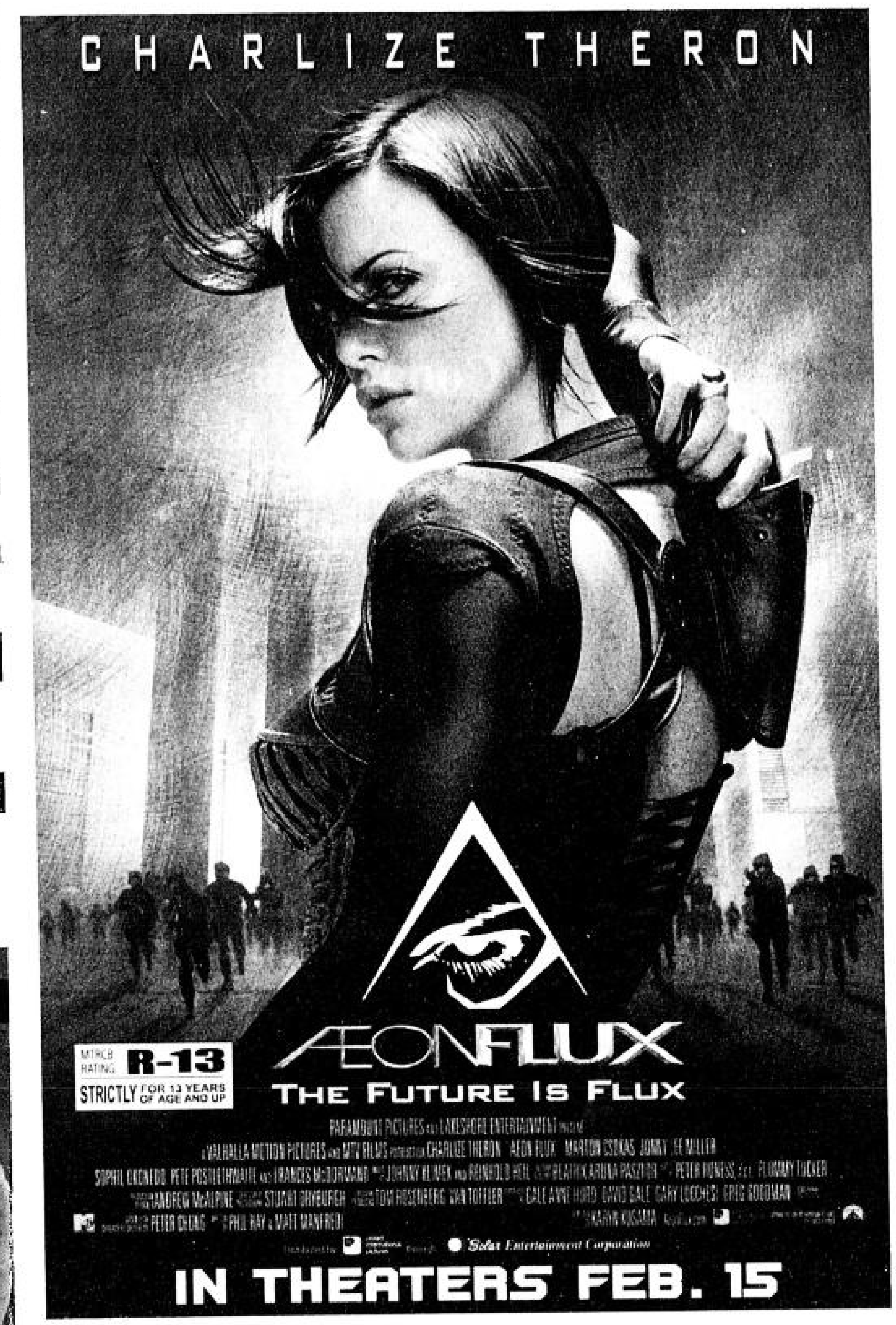
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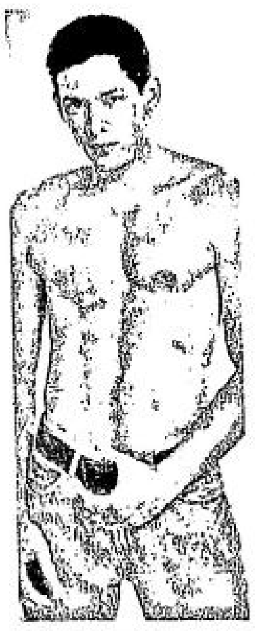
CHRISTIAN Vasquez

One night in the PBB fish bowl

From page A2-3

viewers, for sure.

The challenge is now for the show's small army of producers, editors, and story editors to create or dig up more stories and situations like this. For instance, it would be interesting to see how the show's producers would train the spotlight on former matinee idol Rustom Padilla. With his bleached hair and frail physique, he looks like a caricature.

But that's "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition" for you. It has colorful celebrities you can't take your eyes off for one reason or the other, and situations and conflicts that will hopefully affect viewers—tickle their funny bones, tug at their heartstrings—consistently and without fail. Without question, the show is manipulative. But it's safe to assume that viewers don't mind the use of slow-motion, subtitles, editing and sob music, especially when these work ... as they undoubtedly did during the fourth episode.

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1. Every purchase of one (1) I Will Always Love You movie ticket in all participating cinemas from February 10 to 19, 2006 entitles you to one (1) raffle ticket.
2. Fill up the coupon with your name, address, telephone number and signature and drop in drop boxes located at the theater lobby.
3. Raffle ticket/s must be dropped in drop boxes on or before February 19, 2006.
4. Grand Draw will be held on February 23, 2006 at Eat Bulaga between 1:30-2:30PM. All entries will be consolidated at Eat Bulaga, Broadway Centrum where up for grabs are the following:

One (1) Grand Prize winner - PhP 100,000.00 cash

Other prizes:
Three (3) winners of roundtrip tickets to Hong Kong Disneyland for two for four days-three nights
Five (5) winners of Sanyo ST-21G1 53.34 cm (21") TV sets
Five (5) winners of Sanyo SR-S63DW 0.18cum (6 cu. Ft.) refrigerators Direct Cool
Five (5) winners of American Heritage AHMO-2032 microwave ovens
Five (5) winners of American Heritage AHWD-03 water dispensors
Five (5) winners of iPod Shuffle 512 MB M-9724ZP/A
Ten (10) winners of Orange DVD players
Ten (10) winners of Nokia 1100
Four (4) winners of M2923B 50.8cm (20") Easy Rider bicycles
Three (3) winners of American Home AWT-631P washing machines w/ dryer
Two (2) La Germania SL530-00W gas ranges

5. Winners can only win once. In the event that a name is picked more then once, he/she will get the price of higher value.
6. Winners will be contacted by phone and/or registered mail.
7. Present the winning raffle claim stub and one (1) valid ID when claiming the prizes.
8. Prizes should be claimed at the Regal Entertainment, Inc. office at #38 Valencia St. Quezon City beginning February 24, 2006. The winner must claim his prize within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification. Failure to claim within the allotted time duration forfeits the winner's right over the prize with prior DTI approval.
9. NMI shall contact winners outside Metro Manila and let them choose whether they want to receive their prize via courier or claim it at the Regal Office. Winners shall shoulder all shipping costs.
10. All employees of GMA Network Inc., GMA New Media Inc., Regal Entertainment, Inc., participating cinemas and their relatives up to the second degree of affinity or consanguinity are disqualified from joining.

Per DTI-NCR Permit # 0883, series of 2006

‘Badlis sa Kinabuhi’ found, ‘Pedro Penduko’ and others still lost

The Cebuano movie is saved from total deterioration; Gerry de Leon classics reportedly sighted in Europe

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photo courtesy of Mowelfund and Gloria Sevilla

Gloria Sevilla & Mat Ranillo Jr.

MAT Ranillo Jr., Marta Dy and Gloria Sevilla in “Badlis” (1970).

FILM ARCHIVING ALSO TAKES A VILLAGE, IT seems.

In 2002, a Cebuano classic, Leroy Salvador’s “Badlis sa Kinabuhi,” was restored through the combined efforts of producer-star Gloria Sevilla, Mowelfund director Nick Deocampo, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), Bel Capul of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) and the Australia-based laboratory, ScreenSound.

“They succeeded in saving the visuals, but not the sound,” Sevilla told INQUIRER Entertainment.

“The sound negatives couldn’t be restored,” Deocampo confirmed. “I was telling people about ‘Badlis’ as early as the mid-1990s. But it took five years before restoration work was begun.”

In 1999, the funding from the NCCA was approved and a year later, it was decided that it should be sent abroad since the country didn’t have the facilities to save the 1970 film.

“Fortunately, with the help of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), ‘Badlis’ was sent to Australia where it was discovered that it was quickly turning to jelly,” Deocampo gasped. “I cannot emphasize just how urgent film archiving is. It is a cultural emergency!”

As early as the 1980s, Deocampo said, “Hammy Sotto and Lino Brocka were already sounding the alarm bells, but only a few heeded the call.”

VInegar sundrome

“Prior to that, Ben Pinga set up the Film Heritage Society,” recalled Teddy Co, a film curator and a member of the Committee on Cinema of the NCCA. “In 1977, he organized the first seminar on film preservation and among those who attended were Hammy and Ernie de Pedro.”

Coincidentally, it was also Pinga who helped Sevilla bring “Badlis sa Kinabuhi” to the Berlin International Film Festival, where it was exhibited out of competition in 1970.

“It was shown in the Introduction division,” Sevilla recounted. “It was meant to ‘introduce’ the Philippines to the world.”

“Badlis” was chosen after it romped away with 12 nominations out of 14 categories in that year’s Famas. Sevilla, in fact, won Best Actress and co-star Frankie Navaja Jr., Best Child Actor that year.

“All these reasons make ‘Badlis’ an important film worth saving,” Deocampo reiterated.

In the Film Services Section of ScreenSound Australia, “some 150 hours were spent on repairing the negative [of ‘Badlis’]… which suffered from severe vinegar syndrome,” according to a newsletter of the Southeast Asia Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association. (To think “Badlis” was shot in just two and a half days—60 hours!)

The “vinegar syndrome” is the term for “severe decomposition” characterized by a strong sour smell.

The newsletter continued, “[Since] the images have been transferred onto polyester stock… any blemishing can be cleaned up digitally at a later date… the challenge now is to reproduce the sound negative.”

“They need P400,000 to restore the sound,” Sevilla pointed out. “I told Mowelfund that I can help. I’ll ask my daughter Suzette Ranillo to dub it, for free. Since it’s my movie, more or less, I can still recall the dialogue and we can reconstruct it from memory.”

While on the subject of Pinoy film classics abroad, Sevilla shared that another movie of hers, “Ifugao,” directed by National Artist Gerry de Leon and starring Efren Reyes Sr., was sighted in Europe.

“I heard that a Frenchwoman owns it and she’s unwilling to part with it,” Sevilla said.

“What I heard was, ‘Ifugao’ is in Germany,” Deocampo said. “But it could be stored under the German translation of its English title.”

“Which was ‘Stairway to the Stars,’ ” referring to the Banaue Rice Terrraces,” Sevilla added.

“What I know is that ‘Ifugao’ was left in a film lab in Tokyo or was lost at the Philippine Customs decades ago,” Co said. “The Gerry de Leon film that is supposedly in France is ‘Pedro Penduko,’ also made in 1954 like ‘Ifugao.’”

“Pedro” ended up in France, with another De Leon masterpiece “48 Oras,” said Co, because Brocka left his vintage collection with French critic Pierre Rissient, who is credited for bringing Brocka to Cannes.

The worldwide search for Pinoy film classics continues .

(“Badlis sa Kinabuhi” is scheduled for a screening at Mowelfund’s Aktres: Pelikula at Lipunan film fest at the Gateway Mall on March 18.)

ROUNDUP

Breakup

LONDON—“Constant Gardener” star Ralph Fiennes and longtime partner Francesca Annis have separated, lawyers for Annis said.

The announcement came after the Mail on Sunday newspaper reported that Fiennes had had an affair with a Romanian singer.

“Ms. Annis confirms today that she and Ralph Fiennes are to separate,” said a statement issued Tuesday by her law firm, Schillings.

Fiennes, 43, and 61-year-old Annis met while starring in a 1995 production of “Hamlet,” in which Fiennes played the title role and Annis his mother. Fiennes was married to “ER” star Alex Kingston at the time.

AP

Mistake

SPEARS

LOS ANGELES—Pop star Britney Spears said on Thursday she “made a mistake” by driving a car with her infant son in her lap, but the agency that photographed the incident denied her claim that paparazzi were hounding her.

Spears has said a “frightful” encounter with “physically aggressive” photographers on Monday outside a coffee shop prompted her to pull out of the parking lot without first strapping her 5-month-old baby, Sean, back into his car seat.

Pictures published on Tuesday showed Spears at the wheel of her vehicle, holding Sean on her lap, as she drove down the Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu.

Reuters

Left & right

LOS ANGELES—Director Steven Spielberg, whose film about the killing of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics has provoked controversy, says moviemakers have become much more politically vocal since the re-election of President George W. Bush.

In a roundtable discussion with editors of Newsweek magazine, Spielberg said he knew the film was going to “receive a volley from the right,” but he was surprised “that we received a much smaller, but no less painful, volley from the left.”

Reuters

“funny...highly entertaining and most enjoyable. a first of its kind.
nothing like this in Pinoy movies before. Two hands up.”
-Billy Balbastro, Abante Tonight

“i love the oddball characters in the movie.
I’ve not seen Christopher de Leon
enjoying his character as much as in this movie...”
-Edgar O. Cruz,The Daily Tribune

[Christopher de Leon’s acting in the film is] “ a standout portrayal...
delightfully creative, fresh and vital. he goes to town with his
wonderfully loopy portayal, which lends the film a winning zest and zing.”
-Nestor Torre, Philippine Daily Inquirer

“...simply funny and a work of a genius.
All the actors are naturally good and are
much in their characters like Boyet, Epy, Rico and Paolo”
-Walden Belen, Manila Bulletin

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production design ROY LACHICA director of photography MIGUEL FABIE III associate producer SANDY SANTAMARIA
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Sexiest at the Grammys

CHEER FACTOR

NEW YORK—IN THE CATEgory of Sexiest Dress, Alicia Keys and Teri Hatcher vied for the prize at the Grammys.

Hatcher's plum-colored dress with lace panels by Jean Paul Gaultier was sheer to the point that the boybriefs she wore underneath were clearly visible. Curly hair and strands of pearls completed her wild-girl look.

"I didn't want anybody to have to wonder if I wore underwear or not," quipped Hatcher, a presenter at Wednesday night's show.

Keys chose a black beaded Armani Prive gown with a plunging V-neck and a dramatic low back. It also had a front slit.

"Giorgio Armani made it especially for me. I feel like a winner," Keys told E!'s Ryan Seacrest.

Another sexy number was Christina Milian's silver haltertop Max Azria Atelier dress with a peek-a-boo bodice.

Fashion plate Gwen Stefani's one-shoulder, animal-print gown had a beaded empire waist, a necessary detail to accommodate her pregnant belly.

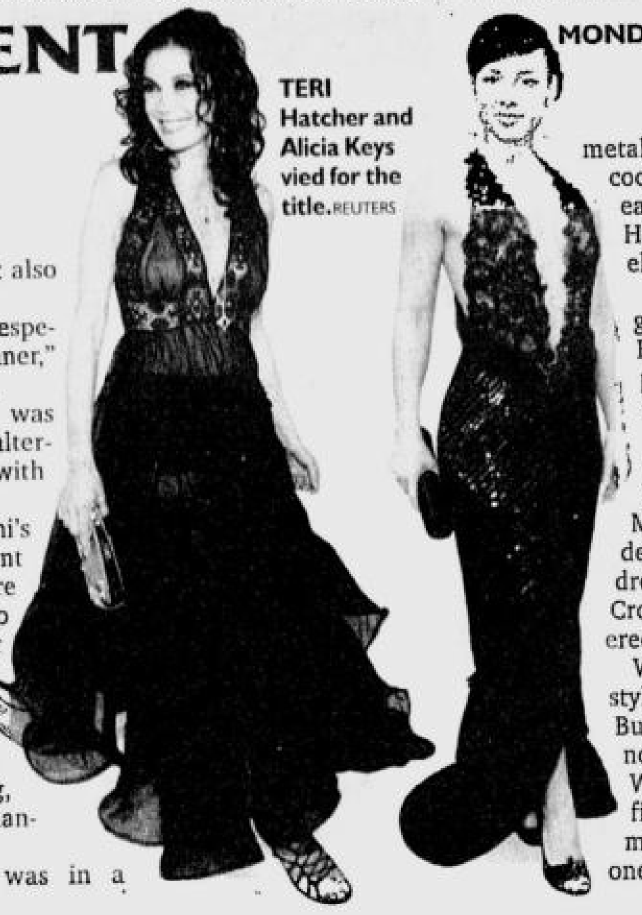
Beyonce was one of the many stars in strapless gowns. Hers was bronze with spider-web beading, which she wore with big, dangling earrings.

Actress Jenna Elfman was in a metallic patchwork strapless cocktail dress and dangling earrings, and Jennifer Love Hewitt wore almost no jewelry with her white dress.

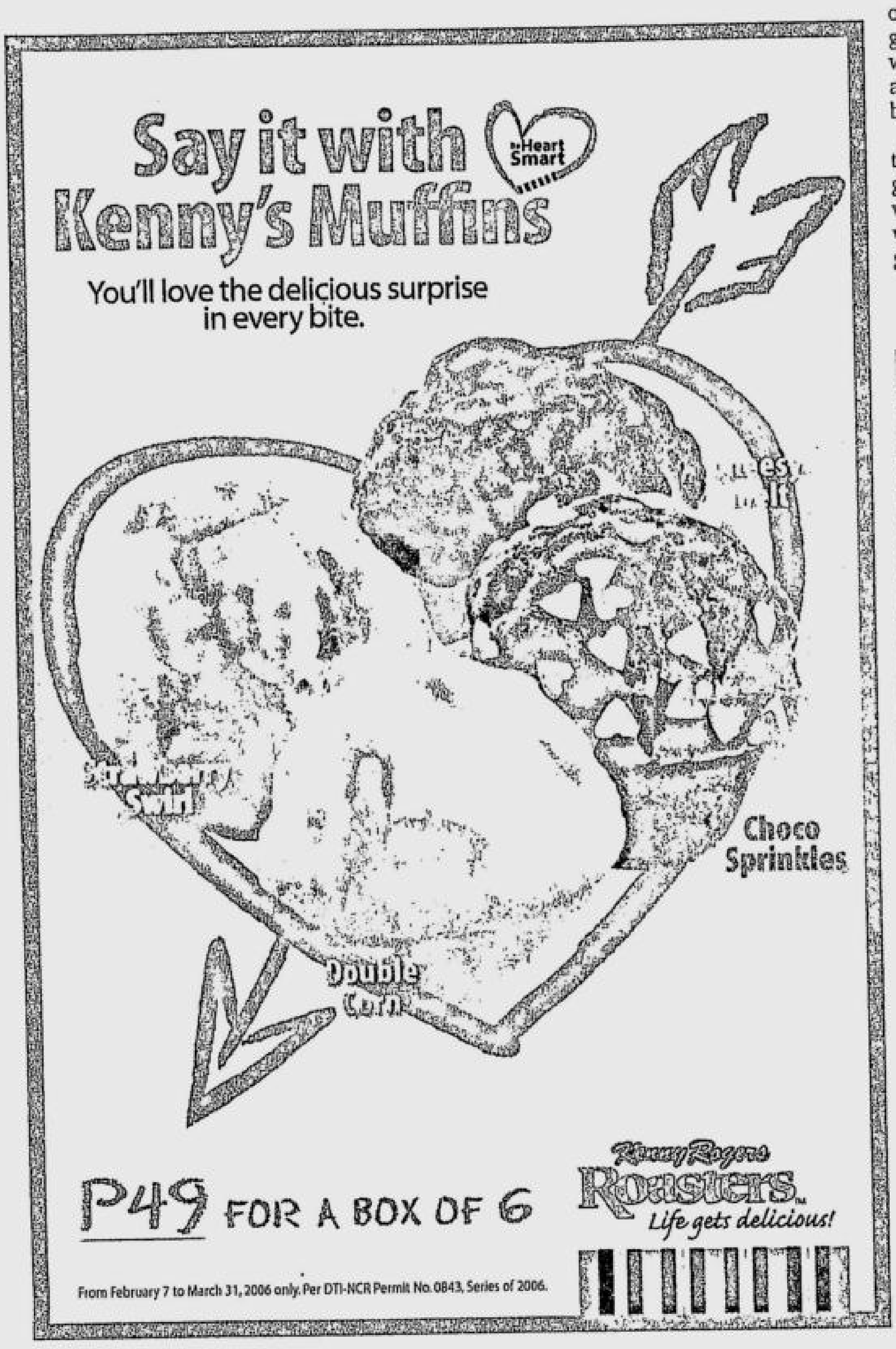
White was all over the green carpet. (Yes, sponsor Heineken changed the carpet color from the traditional red.)

Ciara had on a sleek white gown with metallic belt by Alberta Ferretti and Mary J. Blige had on a Cinderella-like white halter dress. The top of Sheryl Crow's black gown was covered with white embroidery.

With so many different styles at the music awards, Buddhist monk Lama Tashi, a nominee in the Traditional World Music Album category, fit right in. He wore a red monastic robe that went over one shoulder. *AP*



TERI Hatcher and Alicia Keys vied for the title. REUTERS



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4	FUN WITH DICK & JANE 12:15 R2 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	5	FEARLESS 12:15 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35		DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

INXS with their new frontman, 'Rockstar' winner JD Fortune, standing second from left; and the late Freddie Mercury, right.

After INXS —Queen?

By Marinel R. Cruz

ROCK STAR WANNABES IN these parts, who dream of slugging it out in the phenomenal reality TV show "Rock Star," will get that chance when Star World holds Asian auditions in April, said a network executive.

"But our Hong Kong office is still not saying where in Asian country it will be held," said Sasa Tan Carlos, marketing manager of Cable Technology Asia Corp., a member of Star Group Limited.

Last season's "Rock Star," produced by Mark Burnett Productions ("The Apprentice," "Survivor," "The Contender") and aired twice a week on Star World, was a worldwide search for a new lead singer for top '80s band INXS from Australia.

Auditions for the previous season were conducted on six continents, excluding Asia, noted Carlos.

"I think the show's producers were very

AFTER/ A2-2

Fighting for funds

More industry leaders speak on MMFF shares

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE FIGHT FOR THE FILM FEST FUNDS HAS reached fever pitch.

In a story that came out in INQUIRER Entertainment last week, Leo Martinez, Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) director general, accused Vicente del Rosario, presidential consultant for the entertainment industry, of manipulating the Sharing Scheme for the proceeds of the 2005 Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF).

Martinez said the move reduced the shares of the FAP and the Motion Picture Anti-Film Piracy Council, Inc. and introduced two new beneficiaries, the Optical Media Board (OMB) and the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP).

In an interview with INQUIRER Entertainment last Jan. 10, OMB chair Edu Manzano confirmed the impending changes in the distribution of the festival funds. "There was a letter sent to President Macapagal-Arroyo," Manzano said. "We are requesting for the OMB to be given a share of the proceeds, to help us in our enforcement activities."

Unethical

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita issued a memo dated Jan. 24 on the new distribution plan. Del Rosario's subsequent letter informing FAP of the changes was dated Jan. 31.

In a phone interview, FDCP head Rolando "Jacky" Atienza said he was pleased with the development. "The FDCP needs funds to pursue its mandate. The budget allotted to us in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) was not enough."

Asked to comment on Martinez's statement that it is "unethical" for local government funds, like the MMFF proceeds, to be funneled to national offices like the OMB and the FDCP, Atienza quipped: "That's his opinion."

Although he dismissed the protests as "expected," he said he still hoped to "work with all sectors in the industry," the protesters, included.

Atienza explained, "The FDCP's job is to rationalize and coordinate all initiatives for a more effective and efficient use of government resources... It's still possible to work with the FAP. It has a definite role to play. In fact, we encourage its efforts."

FIGHTING/ A2-2

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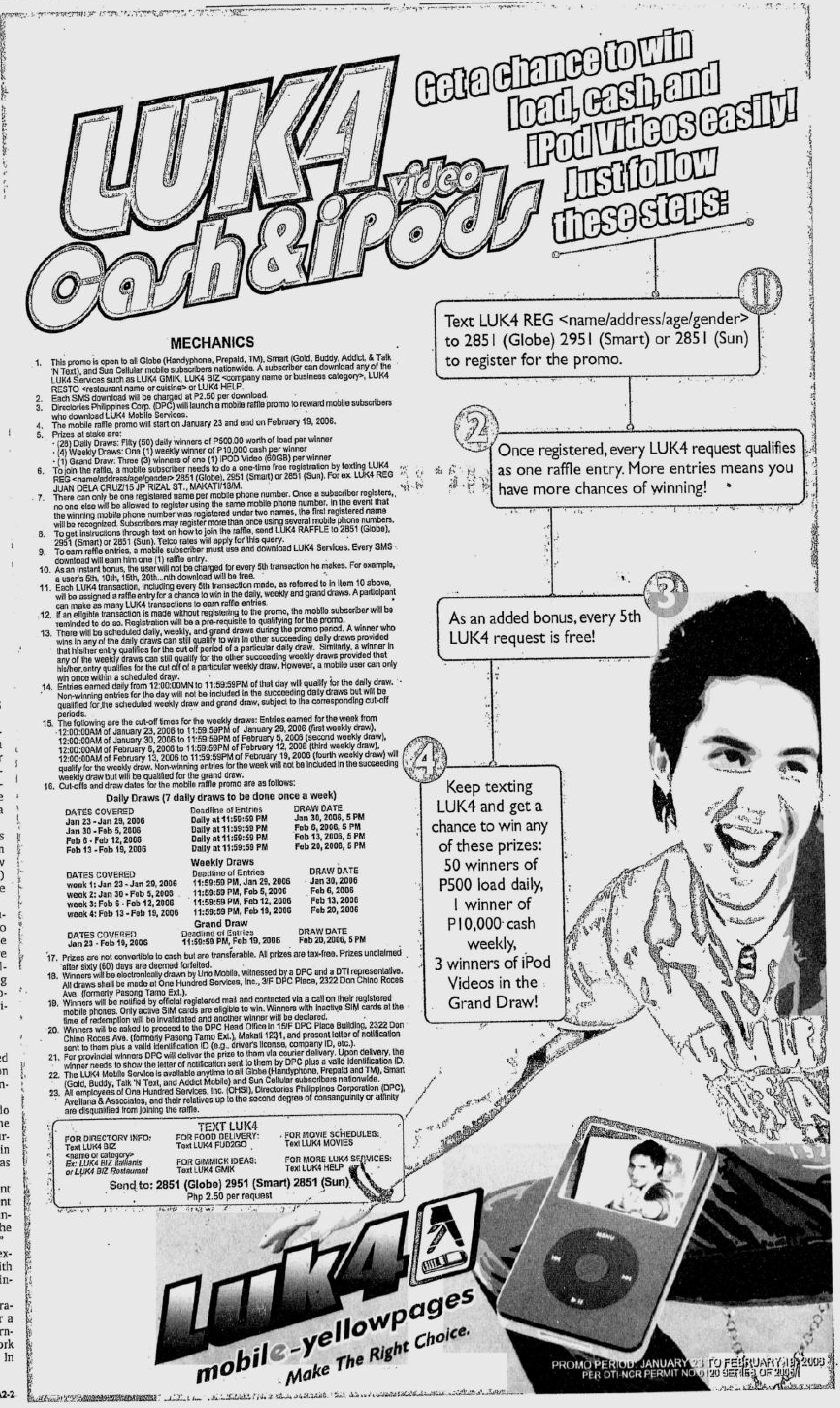
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1. This promo is open to all Globe (Handyphone, Prepaid, TM), Smart (Gold, Buddy, Addict, & Talk 'N Text), and Sun Cellular mobile subscribers nationwide. A subscriber can download any of the LUK4 Services such as LUK4 GMIK, LUK4 BIZ <company name or business category>, LUK4 RESTO <restaurant name or cuisine> or LUK4 HELP.
2. Each SMS download will be charged at P2.50 per download.
3. Directories Philippines Corp. (DPC) will launch a mobile raffle promo to reward mobile subscribers who download LUK4 Mobile Services.
4. The mobile raffle promo will start on January 23 and end on February 19, 2006.
5. Prizes at stake are:
   - (28) Daily Draws: Fifty (50) daily winners of P500.00 worth of load per winner
   - (4) Weekly Draws: One (1) weekly winner of P10,000 cash per winner
   - (1) Grand Draw: Three (3) winners of one (1) IPOD Video (60GB) per winner
6. To join the raffle, a mobile subscriber needs to do a one-time free registration by texting LUK4 REG <name/address/age/gender> 2851 (Globe), 2951 (Smart) or 2851 (Sun). For ex. LUK4 REG JUAN DELA CRUZ/15 JP RIZAL ST., MAKATI/18/M.
7. There can only be one registered name per mobile phone number. Once a subscriber registers, no one else will be allowed to register using the same mobile phone number. In the event that the winning mobile phone number was registered under two names, the first registered name will be recognized. Subscribers may register more than once using several mobile phone numbers.
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10. As an instant bonus, the user will not be charged for every 5th transaction he makes. For example, a user's 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th...nth download will be free.
11. Each LUK4 transaction, including every 5th transaction made, as referred to in item 10 above, will be assigned a raffle entry for a chance to win in the daily, weekly and grand draws. A participant can make as many LUK4 transactions to earn raffle entries.
12. If an eligible transaction is made without registering to the promo, the mobile subscriber will be reminded to do so. Registration will be a pre-requisite to qualifying for the promo.
13. There will be scheduled daily, weekly, and grand draws during the promo period. A winner who wins in any of the daily draws can still qualify to win in other succeeding daily draws provided that his/her entry qualifies for the cut off period of a particular daily draw. Similarly, a winner in any of the weekly draws can still qualify for the other succeeding weekly draws provided that his/her entry qualifies for the cut off of a particular weekly draw. However, a mobile user can only win once within a scheduled draw.
14. Entries earned daily from 12:00:00MN to 11:59:59PM of that day will qualify for the daily draw. Non-winning entries for the day will not be included in the succeeding daily draws but will be qualified for the scheduled weekly draw and grand draw, subject to the corresponding cut-off periods.
15. The following are the cut-off times for the weekly draws: Entries earned for the week from 12:00:00AM of January 23, 2006 to 11:59:59PM of January 29, 2006 (first weekly draw), 12:00:00AM of January 30, 2006 to 11:59:59PM of February 5, 2006 (second weekly draw), 12:00:00AM of February 6, 2006 to 11:59:59PM of February 12, 2006 (third weekly draw), 12:00:00AM of February 13, 2006 to 11:59:59PM of February 19, 2006 (fourth weekly draw) will qualify for the weekly draw. Non-winning entries for the week will not be included in the succeeding weekly draw but will be qualified for the grand draw.
16. Cut-offs and draw dates for the mobile raffle promo are as follows:

Daily Draws (7 daily draws to be done once a week)

DATES COVERED	Deadline of Entries	DRAW DATE
Jan 23 - Jan 29, 2006	Daily at 11:59:59 PM	Jan 30, 2006, 5 PM
Jan 30 - Feb 5, 2006	Daily at 11:59:59 PM	Feb 6, 2006, 5 PM
Feb 6 - Feb 12, 2006	Daily at 11:59:59 PM	Feb 13, 2006, 5 PM
Feb 13 - Feb 19, 2006	Daily at 11:59:59 PM	Feb 20, 2006, 5 PM

Weekly Draws

DATES COVERED	Deadline of Entries	DRAW DATE
week 1: Jan 23 - Jan 29, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Jan 29, 2006	Jan 30, 2006
week 2: Jan 30 - Feb 5, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Feb 5, 2006	Feb 6, 2006
week 3: Feb 6 - Feb 12, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Feb 12, 2006	Feb 13, 2006
week 4: Feb 13 - Feb 19, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Feb 19, 2006	Feb 20, 2006

Grand Draw

DATES COVERED	Deadline of Entries	DRAW DATE
Jan 23 - Feb 19, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Feb 19, 2006	Feb 20, 2006, 5 PM

17. Prizes are not convertible to cash but are transferable. All prizes are tax-free. Prizes unclaimed after sixty (60) days are deemed forfeited.
18. Winners will be electronically drawn by Uno Mobile, witnessed by a DPC and a DTI representative. All draws shall be made at One Hundred Services, Inc., 3/F DPC Place, 2322 Don Chino Roces Ave. (formerly Pasong Tamo Ext.).
19. Winners will be notified by official registered mail and contacted via a call on their registered mobile phones. Only active SIM cards are eligible to win. Winners with inactive SIM cards at the time of redemption will be invalidated and another winner will be declared.
20. Winners will be asked to proceed to the DPC Head Office in 15/F DPC Place Building, 2322 Don Chino Roces Ave. (formerly Pasong Tamo Ext.), Makati 1231, and present letter of notification sent to them plus a valid identification ID (e.g., driver's license, company ID, etc.).
21. For provincial winners DPC will deliver the prize to them via courier delivery. Upon delivery, the winner needs to show the letter of notification sent to them by DPC plus a valid identification ID.
22. The LUK4 Mobile Service is available anytime to all Globe (Handyphone, Prepaid and TM), Smart (Gold, Buddy, Talk 'N Text, and Addict Mobile) and Sun Cellular subscribers nationwide.
23. All employees of One Hundred Services, Inc. (OHSI), Directories Philippines Corporation (DPC), Avellana & Associates, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the raffle.

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FOR DIRECTORY INFO: Text LUK4 BIZ <name or category> *Ex: LUK4 BIZ Italianis or LUK4 BIZ Restaurant*

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FOR MOVIE SCHEDULES: Text LUK4 MOVIES

FOR MORE LUK4 SERVICES: Text LUK4 HELP

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Php 2.50 per request

PROMO PERIOD: JANUARY 23 TO FEBRUARY 19, 2006
PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 0120 SERIES OF 2005

Fighting for funds

From page A3-1

Officers of the Anti-Piracy Council are also protesting the reallocation.

In a letter sent to the President last Feb. 6, the council denounced its "injustice." Written in Filipino, the council's memo echoed Martinez's letter to the President dated Feb. 2: "Del Rosario does not represent, and is not recognized as the spokesperson of, the local film industry."

Ric Camaligan, vice-chair of the council and first vice president of SM Leisure Inc. (which operates SM Cinemas), said in a phone interview: "Del Rosario has no right... He never consulted the council. I never saw him in our meetings in the past two years."

As for Del Rosario's claim that he quit his post as the council's president to avoid a "conflict of interests," Camaligan said, "He resigned only last Feb. 8 after our group sent the letter to the President."

Camaligan said all of the council's officials signed the letter.

Last Friday, Atty. Espiridion Laxa, chair of the FAP and the council, and Rolly Josef, chief of staff of Metro Manila Development Authority chair Bayani Fernando (overall chair of the MMFF), met with Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Joaquin Lagonera in Malacañang, to seek clarification, Martinez said.

Asked for an update the next day, Saturday, Fernando said: "Josef hasn't reported to me yet. The MMDA hasn't received formal communication on the revisions. We will allow all sectors to present their sides on the matter."

All will be heard, Bayani Fernando vows

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangrila Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) FUN WITH DICK AND JANE PG13
2 (DOLBY) FIREWALL PG13
3 (DOLBY) MUNICH R13
4 (DOLBY) FEARLESS PG13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) THE NEW WORLD PG13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (SDDS) UNDERWORLD-2
2 (SDDS) BLOODRAYNE
3 (DTS) DERAILED
4 GOLD (DTS) FIREWALL
5 GOLD (DOLBY) THE NEW WORLD
6 GOLD (SDDS) MUNICH
7 GOLD (DOLBY) FUN W/ DICK & JANE
8 ZATHURA
9 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
10 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 (DOLBY) FIREWALL
3 (DOLBY) MUNICH
4 (DOLBY) NEW WORLD

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 FIREWALL
2 (DTS) I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD
4 FUN W/ DICK & JANE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
3 (DTS) FIREWALL
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 THE MAID
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 (DOLBY) ZATHURA

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 THE MAID
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 (DOLBY) ZATHURA
4 (DTS) RUMOR HAS IT

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 (DOLBY) I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 KUTOB

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 FIREWALL
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 MUNICH

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) FIREWALL
2 (DOLBY) FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 (DOLBY) I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) FIREWALL
2 MUNICH
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 THE NEW WORLD
5 FUN W/ DICK & JANE

starmall EDSA SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FUN W/ DICK & JANE

MARKET! MARKET!
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 DERAILED
3 JARHEAD
4 RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994
1 TUKSO
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
4 BLOODRAYNE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 TUKSO

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 DUNGEON THE DRAGON

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 (DTS EX) FIREWALL
4 SAW-2

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 THE MAN
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
2 TUKSO
3 PAKAWALANG PUSO
4 (DTS) DOOM

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) FUN W/ DICK & JANE
2 TUKSO
3 (DTS) FIREWALL
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 UNDERWORLD-2

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 DERAILED
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 RUMOR HAS IT

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FIREWALL
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
4 (DTS) RESERVED

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 LOLLIPOP & ROSES
2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 THE MAID
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
FUN W/ DICK & JANE
RESERVED
RESERVED

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 ZATHURA
3 (DOLBY) THE MAID
4 (DTS) RUMOR HAS IT

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 TUKSO
2 SAW-2

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 KING KONG

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

A SPECIAL VALENTINE'S DAY PRESENTATION
NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
THE STARS OF "ALEXANDER" & "BATMAN BEGINS" TOGETHER IN ONE GIANT EPIC FROM ACCLAIMED DIRECTOR TERRENCE MALICK.
"ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR!" ---Ruben Nepales Phil. Daily Inquirer
"The BEST HISTORICAL EPIC ROMANCE since TITANIC! ...One of the BEST Movies of the Year!" ---Ebert & Roeper Chicago Sun-Times
COLIN FARRELL as Capt. John Smith
CHRISTIAN BALE as John Rolfe
Q'ORIANKA KILCHER as Pocahontas
"MAGNIFICENT!" ---Merle Wallace NEWSWEEK
A War of Worlds. A Forbidden Love. A Shared Destiny.
The NEW WORLD
BASED ON A TRUE STORY

MTRCB RATING ▶ G GENERAL PATRONAGE
ALL AGES ADMITTED
STEVE MARTIN
KEVIN KLINE
BEYONCÉ KNOWLES
The Pink Panther diamond is missing...
And the world's greatest detective is solving the case one mistake at a time.
THE PINK PANTHER
METRO GOLDWYN MAYER PICTURES AND COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENT A ROBERT SIMONDS PRODUCTION A SHAWN LEVY FILM STEVE MARTIN KEVIN KLINE "THE PINK PANTHER"
JEAN RENO EMILY MORTIMER HENRY CZERNY AND BEYONCÉ KNOWLES
OPENS FEB. 15

MIG Ayesa

After INXS—Queen

From page A3-1

impressed with the overwhelming interest that the show generated in Asia during the first season," she said.

Early speculation is that the next search will be for a replacement for the late Freddie Mercury, front man of the legendary British rock group, Queen.

"Network executives are tight-lipped," said Carlos. "But they have announced that the new season will carry the same format and run for 26 episodes."

She added that last season's hosts, Brook Burke and Dave Navarro, will be retained.

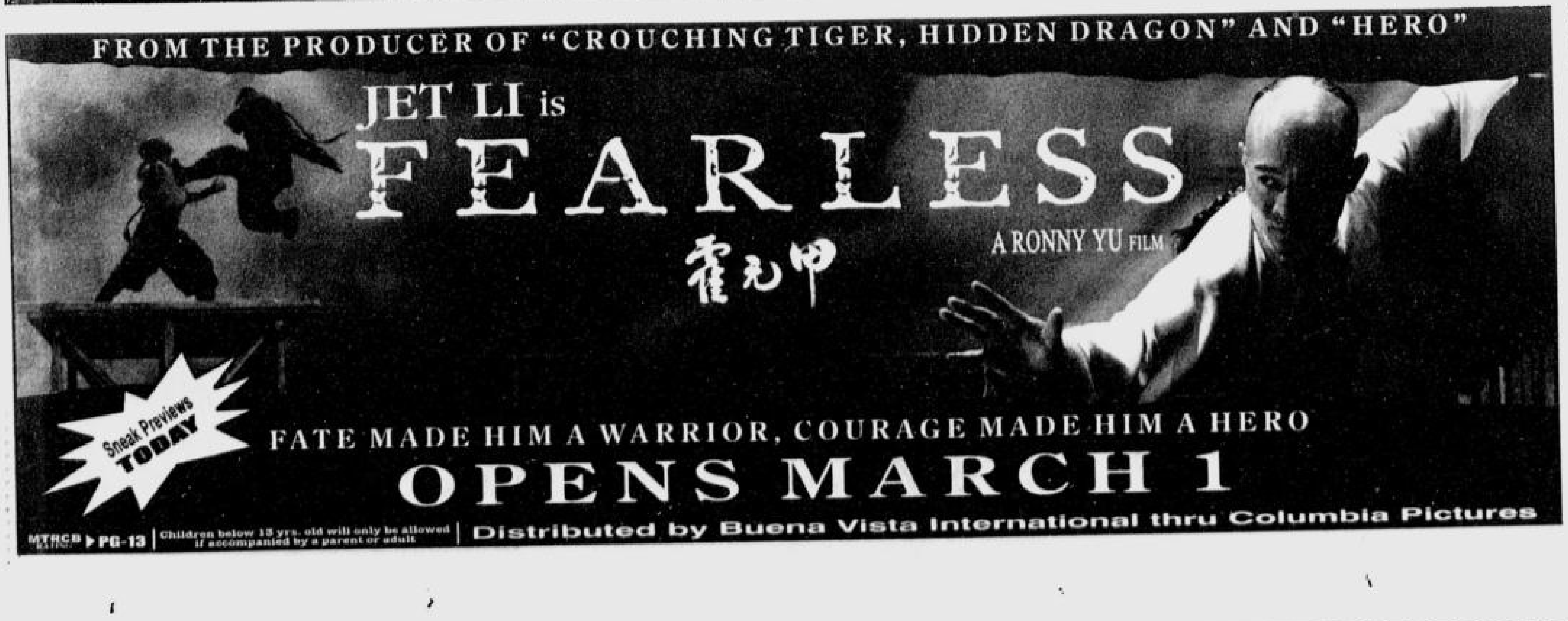
Carlos also said that, in the event Asian contenders make it to the final round, they will be flown to the United States in May.

"Rock Star" features an elimination format similar to Fox's "American Idol." Judging is based on viewer's SMS votes as well as ratings given by members of the featured band.

The winner will join the band on a worldwide concert tour and collaborate on the group's new album.

Last season's winner is Canadian JD Fortune. The 11-week search ended in September. Fortune is now touring with INXS.

Fortune figured in a three-way fight for the title with American Marty Casey and Fil-Aussie MiG Ayesa.


FROM THE PRODUCER OF "CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON" AND "HERO"
JET LI is FEARLESS
霍元甲
A RONNY YU FILM
Sneak Previews TODAY
FATE MADE HIM A WARRIOR, COURAGE MADE HIM A HERO
OPENS MARCH 1
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

Love at first sight in the movies

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THIS VALENTINE WEEK, LOVERS and film buffs are looking for romantic movies to stoke their romantic feelings. Some heartfelt suggestions of movies on the wide-ranging vagaries of love:

SLEEPLESS in Seattle

SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE. Woman who's just gotten engaged (**Meg Ryan**) hears a widower on a call-in radio show (**Tom Hanks**) talking about his departed wife. She becomes obsessed with meeting him, convinced that he may be her destiny. Directed by **Nora Ephron.**

SUNFLOWER. Story of a woman (**Sophia Loren**) who searches for years for her long-lost lover (**Marcello Mastroanni**). Directed by **Vittorio de Sica.**

JU DOU. Compelling drama by **Zhang Yimou** tells the tragic story of a young peasant who's forced to wed an old factory owner, and has an affair with his nephew. Stars **Gong Li.**

GONE WITH THE WIND. Civil war drama focusing on vixenish Southern belle Scarlett O'Hara (**Vivien Leigh**) and her great love (**Clark Gable**).

ANNIE HALL. **Woody Allen**'s autobiographical love story with incisive insights into romance, relationships and fame. **Diane Keaton** plays title role.

AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER. **Cary Grant** and **Deborah Kerr** in a shipboard romantic comedy that turns into a heartfelt drama during its New York City finale.

TWO FOR THE ROAD. Beautifully acted film about a bickering couple (**Audrey Hepburn** and **Albert Finney**) stopping to reminisce about their 12 years of marriage, and trying to save their union. Perceptively directed by **Stanley Doren.**

CASABLANCA. Nightclub owner (**Humphrey Bogart** finds old flame (**Ingrid Bergman**) and her husband, an underground leader (**Paul Henreid**) in a dead-end, war-torn city during World War Two.

A MAN AND A WOMAN. Moving romantic drama by **Claude LeLouch** about a young widow and widower who fall in love, with **Anouk Aimee** and **Jean-Louis Trintignant** playing the lead roles. Intelligent script, winning performances, innovative camera work and direction.

WHEN HARRY MET SALLY. Romantic comedy set in New York City about a man and a woman (**Billy Crystal** and Meg Ryan) who have a great friendship, and struggle to keep it from becoming a romance! Full of witty dialogue and knowing remarks about the ways men and women view each other.

THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN. A scandalous romance between a gentleman and a tainted woman in Victorian England is contrasted with a contemporary affair between the actor and actress who are playing those roles in a movie. With **Meryl Streep** and **Jeremy Irons.**

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE. **Marlon Brando** and Vivien Leigh in a tragic drama about flailing and failed loves.

A FAREWELL TO ARMS. About the ill-fated WWI romance between an American Soldier and British nurse, based on **Ernest Hemingway**'s novel.

DOCTOR ZHIVAGO. Russian poet-doctor (**Omar Sharif**) marries an aristocrat (**Geraldine Chaplin**), but falls in love with a politicized nurse (**Julie Christie**). Based on **Boris Pasternak**'s epic novel.

THE BROWNING VERSION. **Michael Redgrave** is moving as a schoolteacher who realizes he's a failure, with an unfaithful wife and a new teaching position he doesn't want.

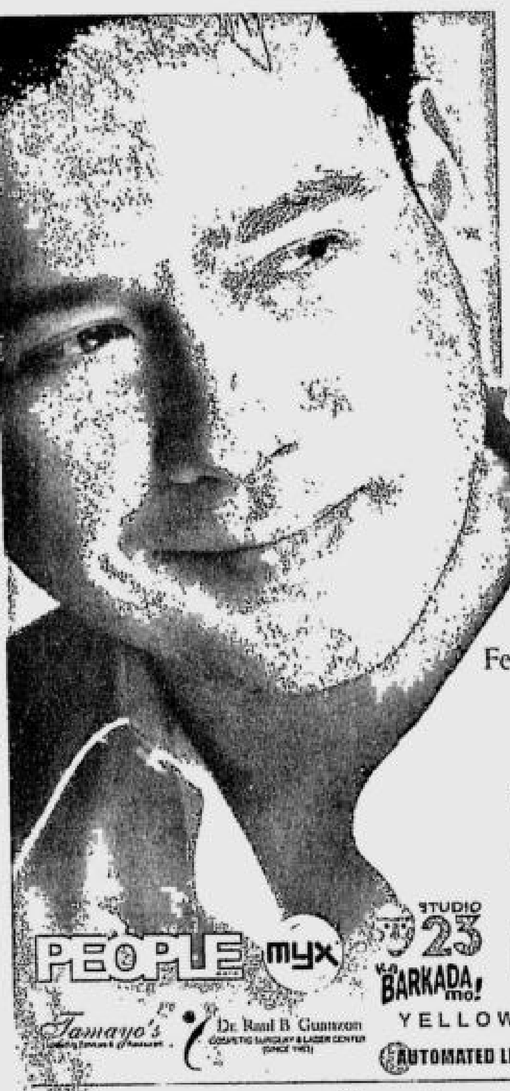
GHOST

MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION. A drunken playboy (**Robert Taylor**) mends his ways and becomes a respected surgeon in order to restore the eyesight of a woman (**Irene Dunne**) he blinded in an auto accident.

GHOST. **Patrick Swayze** is killed, and tries to warn his grieving girlfriend (**Demi Moore**) that she's in danger, too.

WAR OF THE ROSES. The saga of a marriage that goes sour, to say the least! **Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner** and **Danny DeVito** star.

Have a love-filled Valentine's Day, everyone!



The most unforgettable
love songs.
One unforgettable singer.

RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO
Classic Romance
with guests
Ms. Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo
and Ms. Ayen Munji-Laurel

February 14, 2006 at the Rockwell Tent
Show begins at 8:30 pm
Musical Direction by Jun Latonio
Stage Direction by Roxanne Lapus

Tickets at Php 1,500 (Patron) and Php 2,000 (VIP)
Cocktails for VIP ticket holders from 7-8:30 pm
Available at TicketWorld or contact 0919-6810552
For the benefit of the House of Refuge Foundation

PEOPLE myx STUDIO 23 BARKADA mo! INQUIRER PLDT
Tamayo's Dr. Raul B. Guanzon COSMETIC SURGERY & LASER CENTER
YELLOWDOORGALLERY
AUTOMATED LIGHTWORKS ENTERTAINMENT
THOUGHTS & NOTIONS ASTRO
Sony Ericsson
Clothes by JC Buendia
VICOR
with radio partners:
WRocK

Wining, Dining and Dancing: Hyatt Regency Manila
Celebrates Valentine's Day on February 14, 2006

Romancing under the Stars at the Roof Deck
Special Valentine Dinner for two at P 3,600+++
Two glasses of toasting sparkling wine, white wine for starters and red wine to accompany the main course, a complimentary photograph of the couple, a long-stemmed red rose for the lady, a box of chocolates to take home and waived minimum charge for the couple at the ***Valentine's Dance Party.***

Valentine's Dance Party at Sampaguita Room
P 750+++ minimum consumable charge per person
Swing to the rhythm on this magical night. Bar will be serving the best cocktails to accompany the selection of savory pica-pica.

Café Al Fresco
Special Valentine Dinner for two at P 2,900+++
Tempura Misono
Special Valentine Buffet for two at P 3,600+++
Both Valentine's Dinner Specials come with a complimentary glass of sparkling wine for two, a long-stemmed rose for the lady, a box of chocolates and waived minimum charge to the ***Valentine's Dance Party.***

HYATT REGENCY MANILA
2702 Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines
Phone: 833-1234

KOREA'S No.1 HIT FOR 2005

ABANGAN MAMAYANG GABI

Hindi sexy.
Hindi pretty.
Hindi mahinhin.
Hindi mo mapipigilang siya'y mahalin.

Ito ang kuwento ng isang babaeng babaguhin ang kahulugan ng kagandahan.

My name is KIM SAM SOON

Lunes - Biyernes
Pagkatapos ng StarStruck

Asianovelas
The Heart of Asia
GMA

Bon Appétit

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

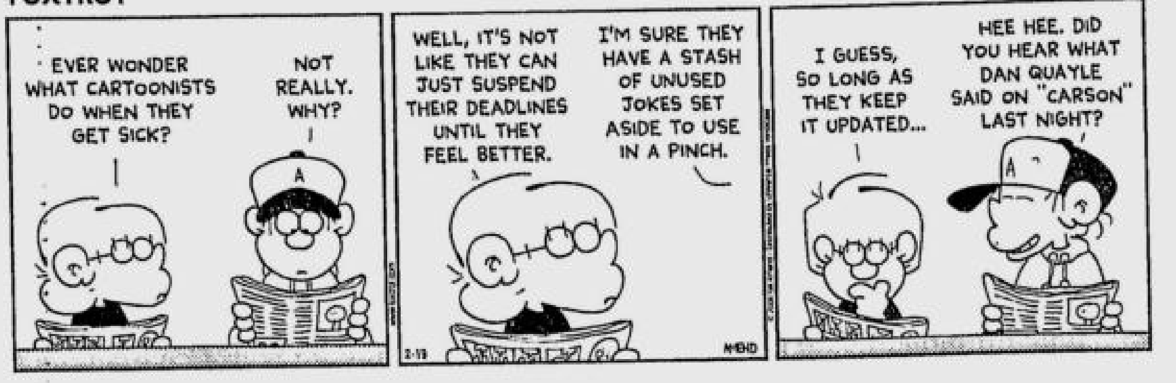
ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2006

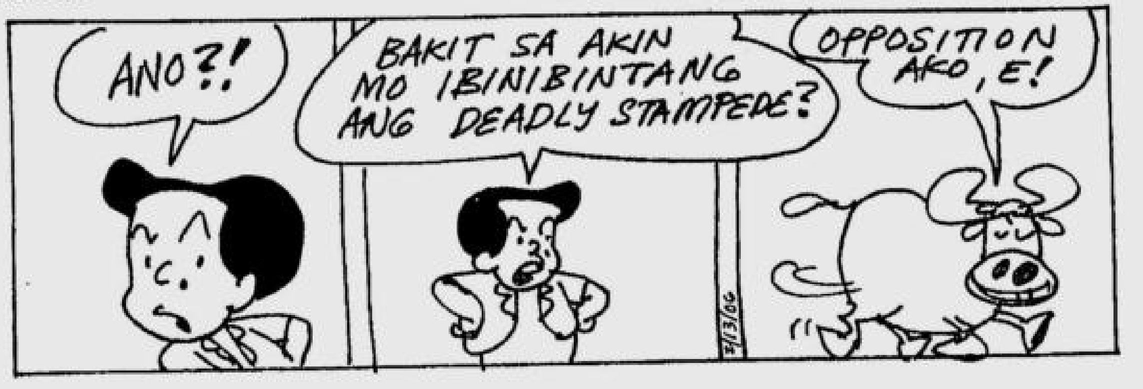
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


EVER WONDER WHAT CARTOONISTS DO WHEN THEY GET SICK?
NOT REALLY. WHY?
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE THEY CAN JUST SUSPEND THEIR DEADLINES UNTIL THEY FEEL BETTER.
I'M SURE THEY HAVE A STASH OF UNUSED JOKES SET ASIDE TO USE IN A PINCH.
I GUESS, SO LONG AS THEY KEEP IT UPDATED...
HEE HEE. DID YOU HEAR WHAT DAN QUAYLE SAID ON "CARSON" LAST NIGHT?
2-13
AMEND

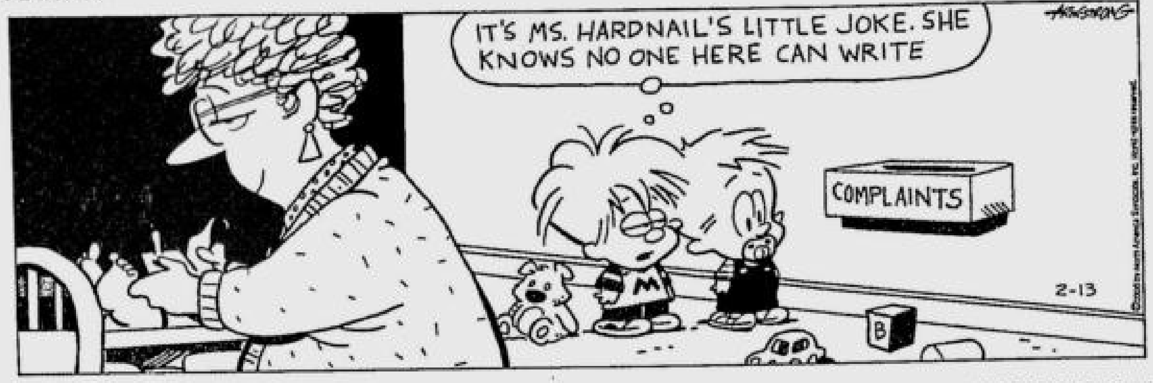
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANO?!
BAKIT SA AKIN MO IBINIBINTANG ANG DEADLY STAMPEDE?
OPPOSITION AKO, E!
2/13/06

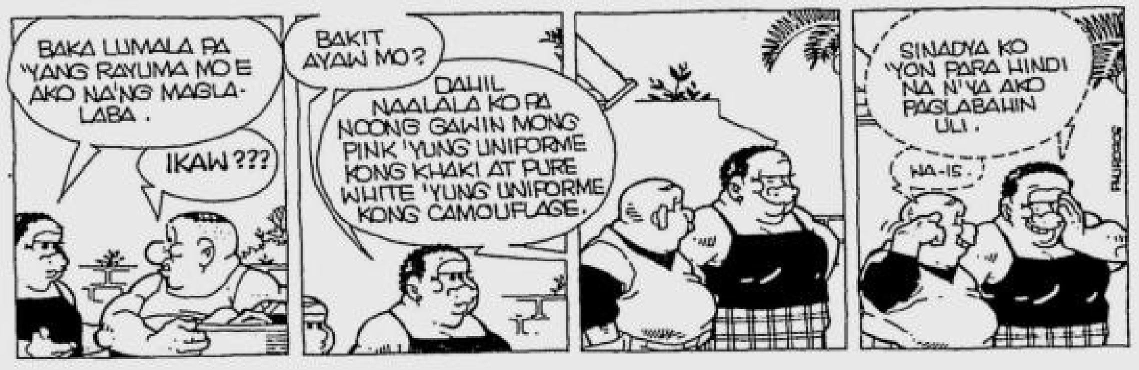
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


IT'S MS. HARDNAIL'S LITTLE JOKE. SHE KNOWS NO ONE HERE CAN WRITE
COMPLAINTS
2-13

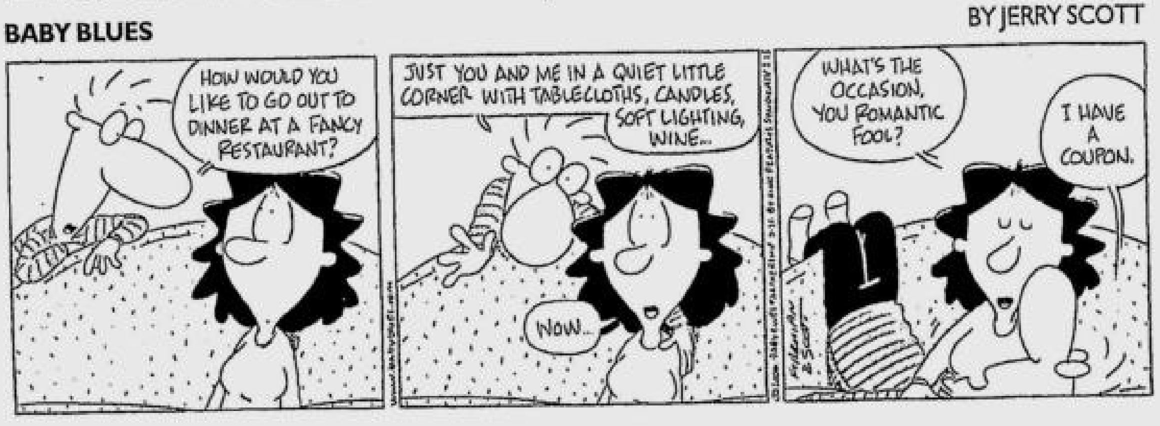
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


BAKA LUMALA PA 'YANG RAYUMA MO E AKO NA'NG MAGLA-LABA.
IKAW???
BAKIT AYAW MO?
DAHIL NAALALA KO PA NOONG GAWIN MONG PINK 'YUNG UNIFORME KONG KHAKI AT PURE WHITE 'YUNG UNIFORME KONG CAMOUFLAGE.
SINADYA KO 'YON PARA HINDI NA N'YA AKO PAGLABAHIN ULI.
NA-IS.

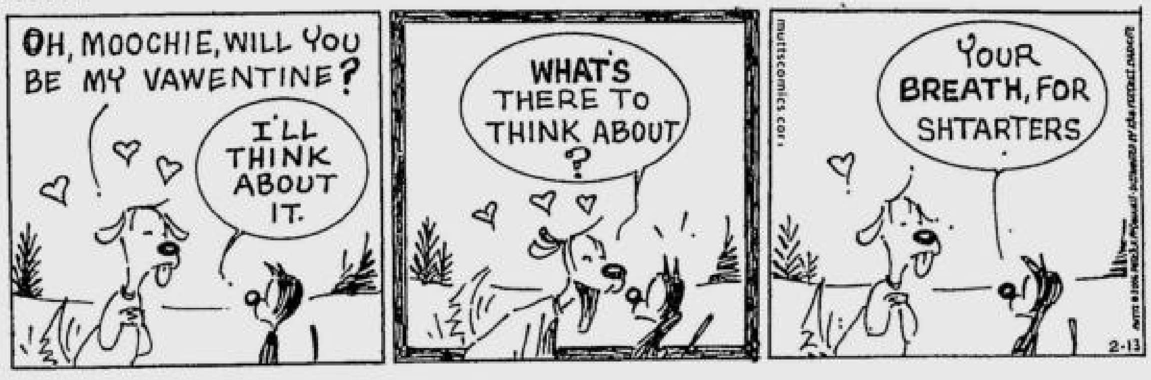
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO OUT TO DINNER AT A FANCY RESTAURANT?
JUST YOU AND ME IN A QUIET LITTLE CORNER WITH TABLECLOTHS, CANDLES, SOFT LIGHTING, WINE...
NOW...
WHAT'S THE OCCASION, YOU ROMANTIC FOOL?
I HAVE A COUPON.

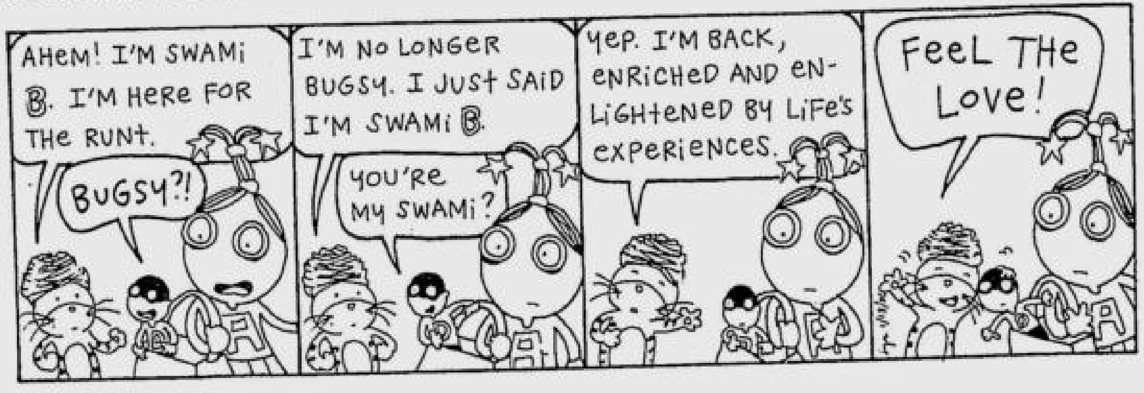
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, MOOCHIE, WILL YOU BE MY VAWENTINE?
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
WHAT'S THERE TO THINK ABOUT?
YOUR BREATH, FOR SHTARTERS
muttscomics.com
2-13

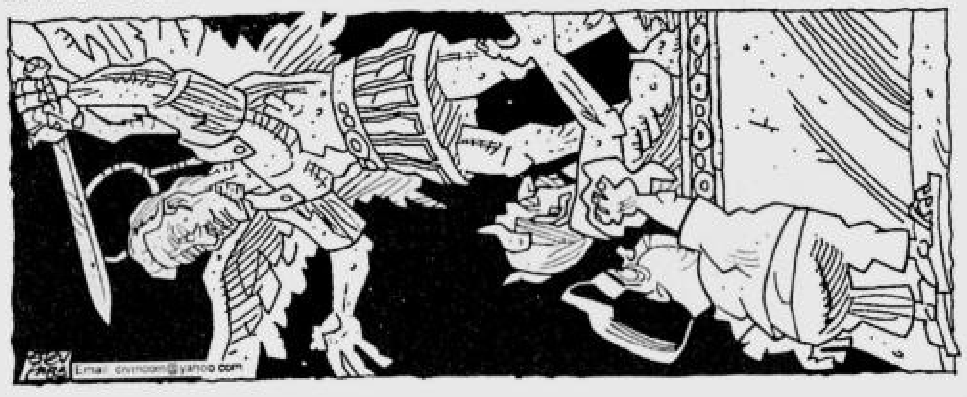
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


AHEM! I'M SWAMI B. I'M HERE FOR THE RUNT.
BUGSY?!
I'M NO LONGER BUGSY. I JUST SAID I'M SWAMI B.
YOU'RE MY SWAMI?
YEP. I'M BACK, ENRICHED AND ENLIGHTENED BY LIFE'S EXPERIENCES.
FEEL THE LOVE!

DIVINE COMEDY

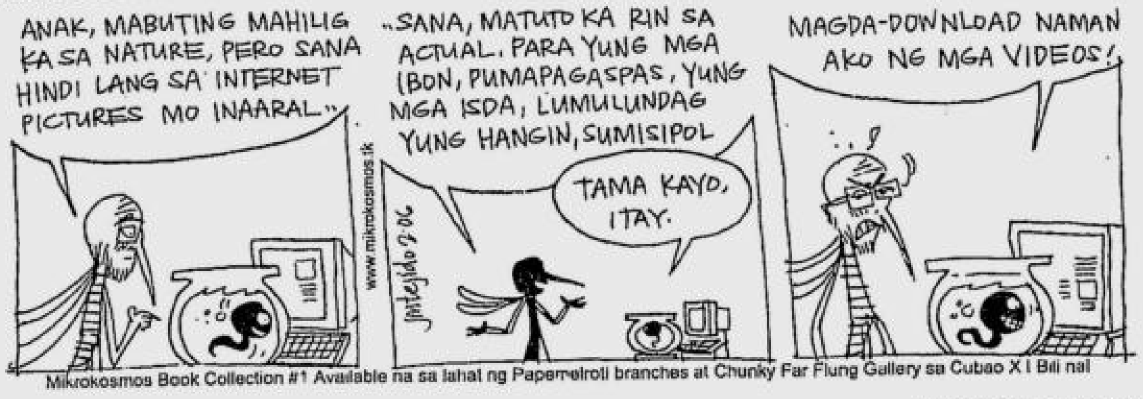
BY STEVEN PABALINAS



DAHIL HINDI MAABOT NG DEBOTONG UNANO ANG ESTATWA NI ST. MICHAEL ARCHANGEL, YUNG ESTATWA NI LUCIFER NA LANG ANG HINAPLOS NYA NG PANYO

MIKROKOSMOS

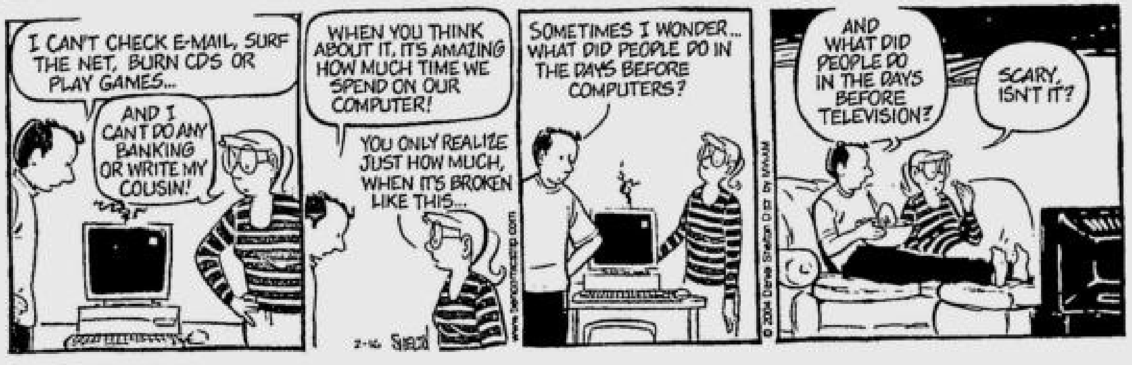
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANAK, MABUTING MAHILIG KA SA NATURE, PERO SANA HINDI LANG SA INTERNET PICTURES MO INAARAL..
..SANA, MATUTO KA RIN SA ACTUAL. PARA YUNG MGA IBON, PUMAPAGASPAS, YUNG MGA ISDA, LUMULUNDAG YUNG HANGIN, SUMISIPOL
TAMA KAYO, ITAY.
MAGDA-DOWNLOAD NAMAN AKO NG MGA VIDEOS!
www.mikrokosmos.tk
jmtejido 2-06

Mikrokosmos Book Collection #1 Available na sa lahat ng Papemelroti branches at Chunky Far Flung Gallery sa Cubao X I Bili na!

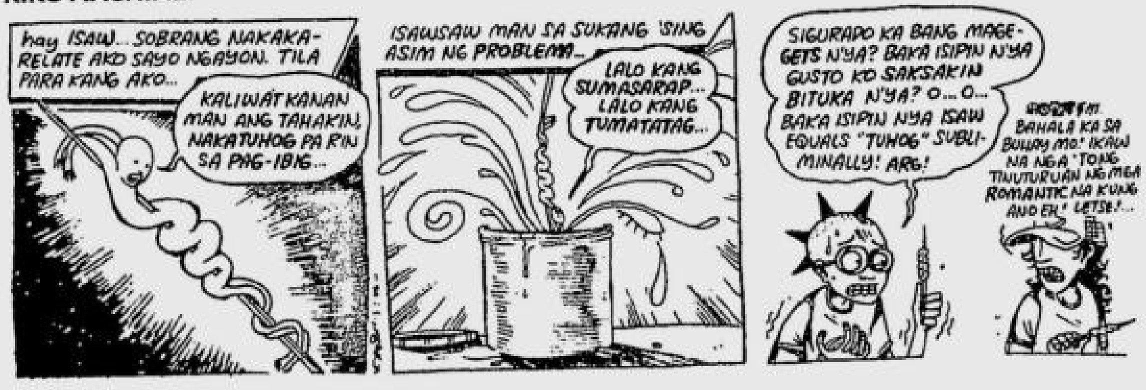
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I CAN'T CHECK E-MAIL, SURF THE NET, BURN CDS OR PLAY GAMES...
AND I CAN'T DO ANY BANKING OR WRITE MY COUSIN!
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, IT'S AMAZING HOW MUCH TIME WE SPEND ON OUR COMPUTER!
YOU ONLY REALIZE JUST HOW MUCH, WHEN IT'S BROKEN LIKE THIS...
SOMETIMES I WONDER... WHAT DID PEOPLE DO IN THE DAYS BEFORE COMPUTERS?
AND WHAT DID PEOPLE DO IN THE DAYS BEFORE TELEVISION?
SCARY, ISN'T IT?

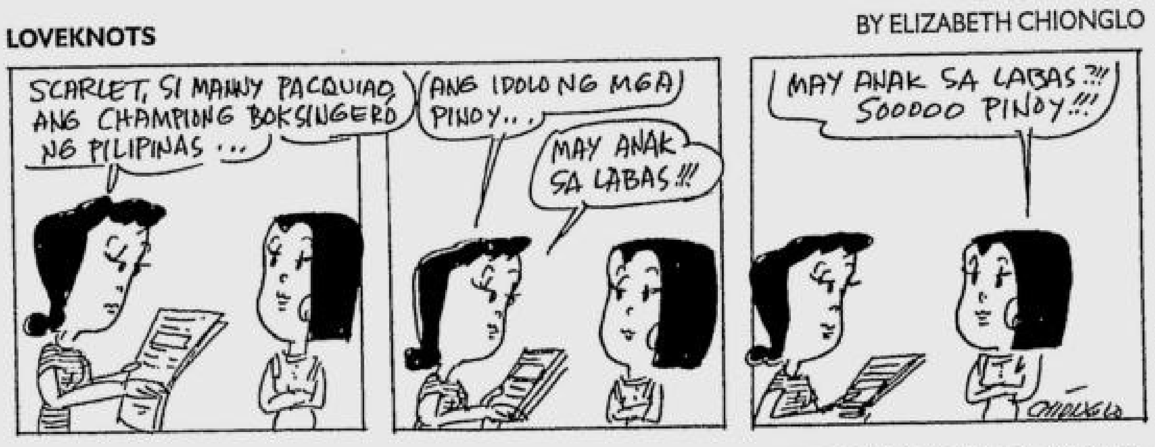
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hay ISAW... SOBRANG NAKAKA-RELATE AKO SAYO NGAYON. TILA PARA KANG AKO...
KALIWAT KANAN MAN ANG TAHAKIN, NAKATUHOG PA RIN SA PAG-IBIG...
ISAWSAW MAN SA SUKANG 'SING ASIM NG PROBLEMA...
LALO KANG SUMASARAP... LALO KANG TUMATATAG...
SIGURADO KA BANG MAGE-GETS N'YA? BAKA ISIPIN N'YA GUSTO KO SAKSAKIN BITUKA N'YA? O...O... BAKA ISIPIN NYA ISAW EQUALS "TUHOG" SUBLIMINALLY! ARG!
BAHALA KA SA BUHAY MO! IKAW NA NGA 'TONG TINUTURUAN NG MGA ROMANTIC NA KUNG ANO EH! LETSE!...

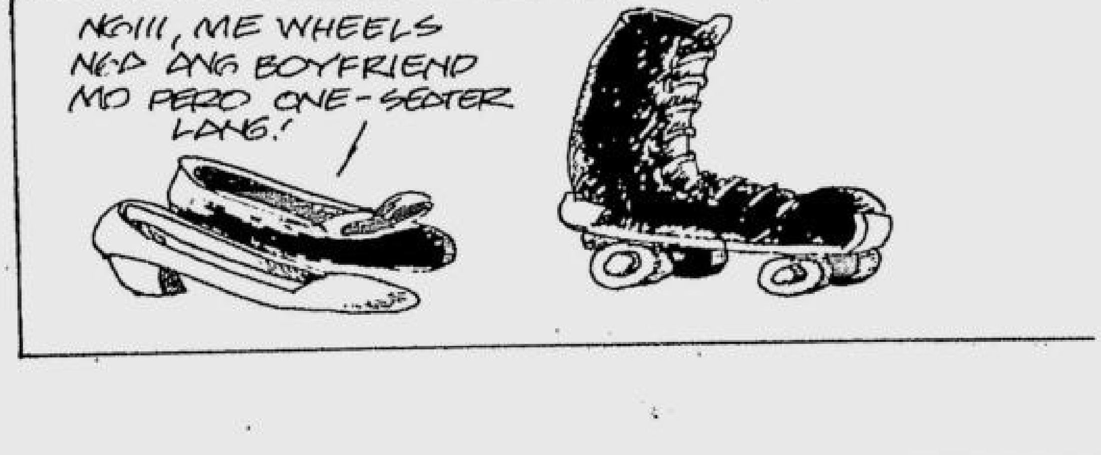
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SCARLET, SI MANNY PACQUIAO ANG CHAMPIONG BOKSINGERO NG PILIPINAS...
ANG IDOLO NG MGA PINOY...
MAY ANAK SA LABAS!!!
MAY ANAK SA LABAS?!! SOOOOO PINOY!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NGIII, ME WHEELS NGA ANG BOYFRIEND MO PERO ONE-SEATER LANG!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have lots of energy. People like to be around you because you're frank, honest and brave. You tell it like it is. You're not afraid to be uninhibited and different. You have a fine mind. You know that by demanding freedom for yourself, you awaken this spark in others. Major changes are possible in the year ahead, perhaps similar to 1997.

Birthdate of: George Segal, actor; Stockard Channing, actress; Peter Gabriel, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): As you begin this week, give some thought to what you really want to be when you grow up. You know it's time to sing your song!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): It's very important for you to solidify your anchor in the world. You need to establish a home base for yourself where you can feel secure for you and your loved ones.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Things are on the move! Many of you are changing residences or changing jobs again. Don't resist this; just go with the flow. (You always do.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're starting to get quite serious about your job now. You want to find meaningful work. Deep down, you're questioning a lot of basic values.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Now and in the next year, many of you will enter a completely new sandbox. It will be a whole new world and might even require a different wardrobe!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's time to start to dismantle much of what you created since the early '90s. Go through closets, cupboards, garages, basements and attics.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a powerful time of your life. You see what works; you see what doesn't work. Make the best use of this chance to accomplish what you want.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're really coming into your own now. The next few years will be a time of harvest! The seeds you planted in the past will now come to fruition.

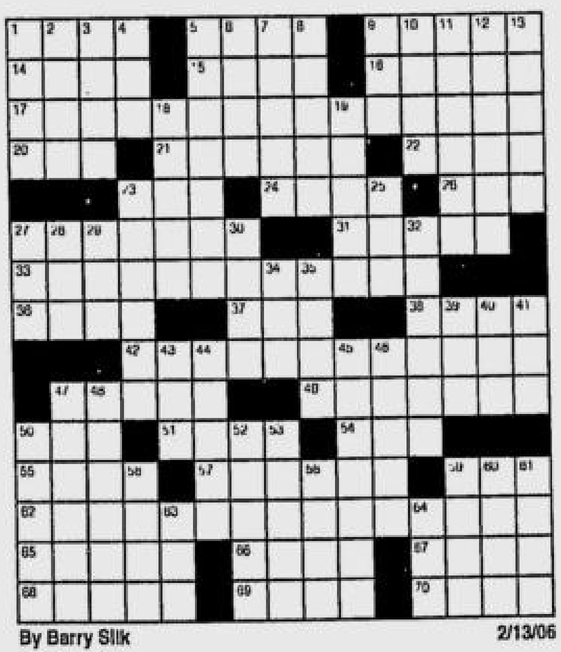
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You see the goals you want to achieve, but you're not there yet. Continue to get extra training and experience so that you'll be ready!.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Partners might change jobs now or diminish their contribution to you. Don't worry. This only strengthens your resolve and puts you back on your own resources.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Many of you had difficulties with relationships recently, because you're starting to take your power. For 15 years, you've been lying low. Now you're going to deal with your external world in style!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): In the year ahead, continue to work hard. This is your testing time. If you keep up with this hard work (which seems overwhelming at times), you will succeed!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

2/13/06

ACROSS
1 Part of a door frame
5 Thin nail
9 Clue for 17A, 33A, 42A and 62A
14 Prefix meaning uniform
15 Zap with light
16 Part of Asia Minor
17 See 9A
20 __ "King" Cole
21 Bilingual Muppet
22 Way to go
23 Eat late
24 Pentium product
26 Wallflowerish
27 Ultimate consumer
31 Two toppers
33 See 9A
36 Golf gadgets
37 Goddess of folly
38 Perimeter
42 See 9A
47 Rubber tree sap
49 Short end of the stick
50 Pina colada ingredient
51 Claim to a share
54 Possesses
55 Inside: pref.
57 Cruise movie
59 Uncouth clod
62 See 9A
65 Poker announcement
66 M. Kitman or R. Ebert
67 Star in Lyra
68 Little ones
69 Web page file letters
70 Cyclotron particle

DOWN
1 __-Claude Van Damme
2 Shade of blue
3 Jeff's partner
4 Life lines?
5 Short fly ball
6 Butts
7 Jellied meat
8 Demise
9 __ for tat
10 Runaway victory
11 Apprehensive
12 Musical intervals
13 Actress Bates
18 Pizza feature
19 Singer Bonnie
23 Daily event in the west
25 Historic beginning?
27 CPR specialist
28 Highland negative
29 Casino cube
30 Harvest
32 Improves text
34 Biblical suffix
35 Scorch
39 Unknown John
40 Cookie-selling org.
41 Unagi, at a sushi bar
43 Held first place
44 Leaves a stage
45 Native Mexican people
46 Plucked sound
47 Foolishness
48 Acela operator
50 Ignited again
52 Flub
53 Have on
56 Look at lasciviously
58 Forbidding
59 Help do wrong
60 Kind of stick?
61 Test
63 Overhead RRs
64 One Gabor

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

I	N	D	I	R	E	C	T	■	R	E	L	I	S	H
D	I	E	S	I	R	A	E	■	O	M	E	R	T	A
C	A	M	P	S	I	T	E	■	B	U	N	K	E	R
A	G	E	■	E	N	S	U	R	E	S	■	S	A	N
R	A	R	E	■	■	■	P	E	R	■	R	O	L	E
D	R	I	L	L	E	R	■	A	T	T	I	M	E	S
S	A	T	I	A	T	E	■	R	E	A	P	E	R	S
■	■	■	■	Z	E	N	■	E	L	M	■	■	■	■
C	O	W	H	E	R	D	■	R	E	P	A	C	K	S
A	R	I	A	D	N	E	■	S	E	A	L	A	N	T
S	I	L	T	■	I	L	L	■	■	■	L	E	I	A
C	O	B	■	A	T	L	A	S	E	S	■	S	T	Y
A	L	U	M	N	I	■	M	A	L	A	M	U	T	E
R	E	R	I	D	E	■	A	N	S	W	E	R	E	R
A	S	S	A	Y	S	■	S	E	E	S	T	A	R	S

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2/11/06

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February 19, Sunday
8:00 a.m.
LIVE VIA SATELLITE
Las Vegas USA

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Southmall, Bacoor and Fairview

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MTRCB Rating: PG-13

GUARANTEED SEATS

ADMIT ONE

THE PODIUM 633-8976
FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
02:00 FS / 02:25 MF / 04:35 / 06:45
08:20 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:35 END
FIREWALL
01:40FS / 02:10 MF / 04:25 / 06:40
08:25 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:45 END
MEGAMALL
FEARLESS

CEBU (032) 231-3876
FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30 / 03:30 / 05:30 / 07:30
09:05 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:05 END
FIREWALL
11:50 FS / 11:10 MF / 01 14 . 03:18 / 05:22 / 07:26
09:18 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:25 END
DERAILED
12:00 FS / 12:18 MF 02:36 / 04:54 / 07:12
09 03 LFS / 09 30 LMF / 11 20 END

movietime

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 FEARLESS
2 FIREWALL
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
6 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
7 SAW 2
8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
9 NEW WORLD
10 UNDERWORLD 2
11 DERAILED
12 MUNICH

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 FEARLESS
2 FIREWALL
3 NEW WORLD
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 SAW 2
7 UNDERWORLD 2
8 MUNICH
9 BLOODRAYNE
10 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 FIREWALL
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 NEW WORLD

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FIREWALL
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 MUNICH
2 BLOODRAYNE
3 SAW 2
4 FIREWALL
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
7 NEW WORLD
8 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
9 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
10 UNDERWORLD 2
11 BLOODRAYNE
12 FEARLESS

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
2 FIREWALL
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FEARLESS
5 NEW WORLD
6 SAW 2
7 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
8 UNDERWORLD 2
9 MUNICH
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 NEW WORLD
2 FIREWALL
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 FEARLESS
2 MUNICH
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 BLOODRAYNE
7 FIREWALL
8 NEW WORLD

SM CITY MANILA
1 MUNICH
2 BLOODRAYNE
3 FIREWALL
4 NEW WORLD
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 FEARLESS
7 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
8 ZATHURA
9 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
10 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
11 UNDERWORLD 2
12 SAW 2

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 FEARLESS
2 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 FIREWALL
5 NEW WORLD
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 FIREWALL
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 SAW 2
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 UNDERWORLD 2

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FIREWALL

SM CITY BACOOR
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FEARLESS
4 NEW WORLD
5 FIREWALL
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
7 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
8 FEBRUARY LOVEFEST 2006

SM CITY MARILAO
1 SAW 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 FIREWALL

SM CITY LUCENA
1 ZATHURA
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 RUMOR HAS IT
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 SAW 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 LITTLE MANHATTAN

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 FIREWALL
3 DERAILED
4 DOMINO
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6 SAW 2
7 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
8 UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY ILOILO
1 LITTLE MANHATTAN
2 RESERVED
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 ZATHURA
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
7 RESERVED
8 THE MAID

SM CITY DAVAO
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 ZATHURA
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 THE MAID
5 RUMOR HAS IT
6 UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 DERAILED
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 THE MAID

---

smmoviefestivals

Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason • Along Came Polly • Just Like Heaven
40 Year Old Virgin • Meet The Fockers • King Kong • The Perfect Man • Alfie

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SM CINEMA

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING MTRCB RATING SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
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Ayala Greenbelt's Chocolate Festival
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Repertory Philippines presents
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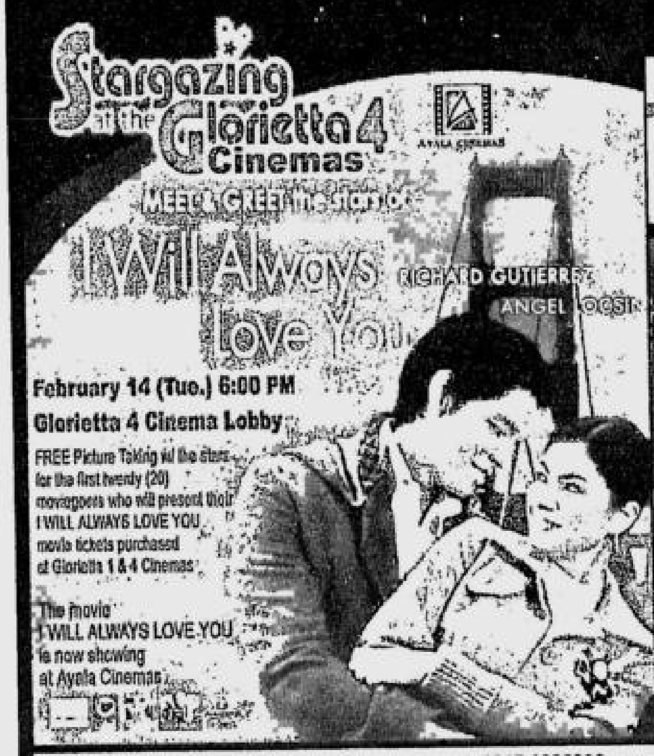
AYALA CINEMAS · THX

Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729 7777

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 FIREWALL	2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	3 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	4 FUN W/ DICK & JANE
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 FUN W/ DICK & JANE	2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	3 THX THE NEW WORLD GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 DERAILED	5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2	6 FIREWALL	7 MUNICH
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 FUN W/ DICK & JANE	2 FIREWALL		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE NEW WORLD GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX WALK THE LINE GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 DERAILED GUARANTEED SEATS	4 MUNICH GUARANTEED SEATS	5 FUN W/ DICK & JANE GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX FIREWALL	2 THE NEW WORLD		
	3 FUN W/ DICK & JANE	4 MUNICH	5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 FIREWALL	2 FUN W/ DICK & JANE	3 SAW 2	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU



Stargazing at the Glorietta 4 Cinemas
AYALA CINEMAS
MEET & GREET the stars of
I Will Always Love You
RICHARD GUTIERREZ
ANGEL LOCSIN

February 14 (Tue.) 6:00 PM
Glorietta 4 Cinema Lobby

FREE Picture Taking w/ the stars for the first twenty (20) moviegoers who will present their I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU movie tickets purchased at Glorietta 1 & 4 Cinemas.

The movie I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU is now showing at Ayala Cinemas.

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REAL WARRIORS

VILORIA vs AGUIRRE

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① FEARLESS (Sneak Preview)
② FUN WITH DICK & JANE
③ THE NEW WORLD
④ FIREWALL
⑤ I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

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Customer Service Hotline: 886-7515

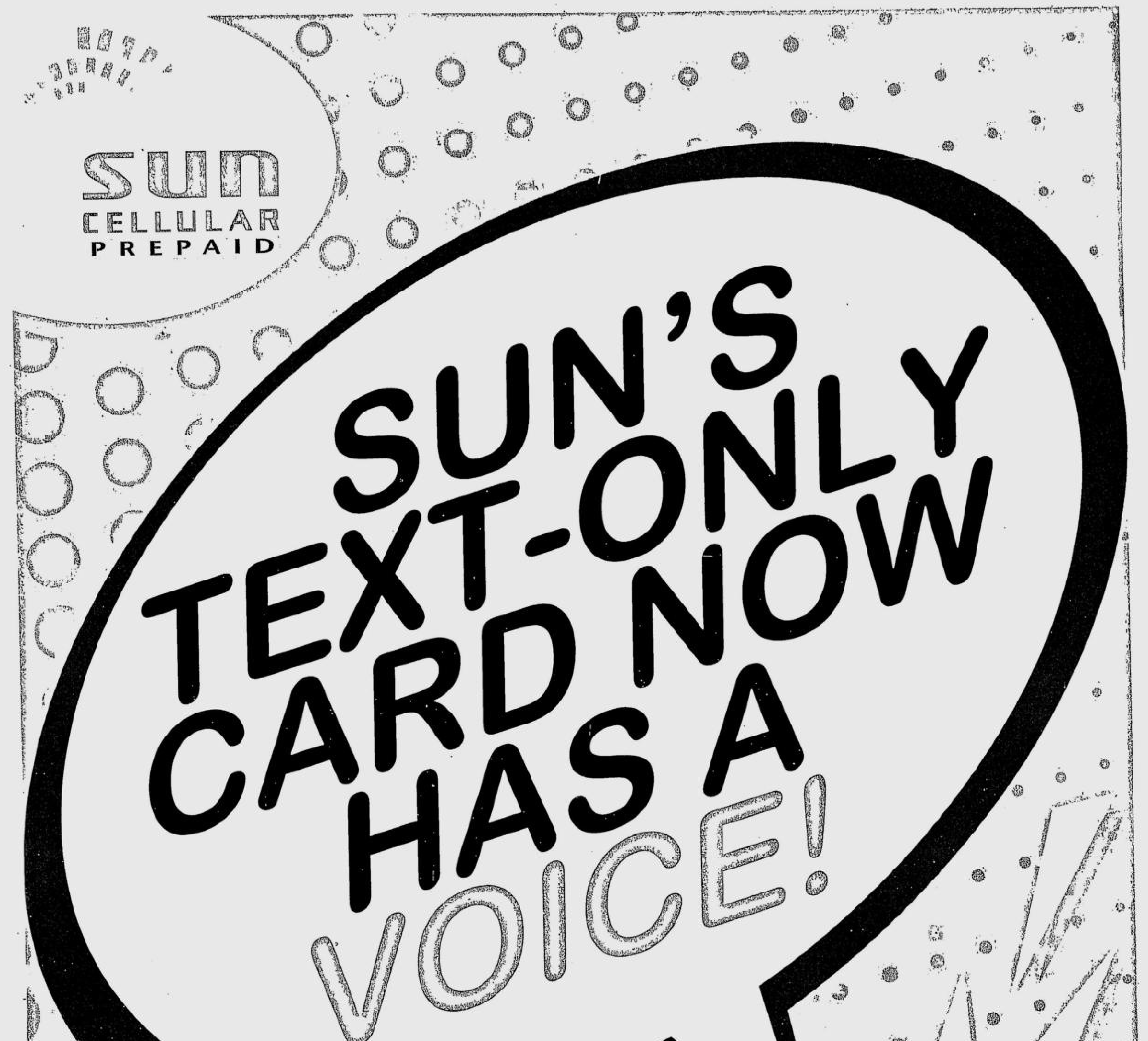
EVENTS! EVENTS!

Christian Bautista
Completely
MALL TOUR

Pavilion Mall
Feb. 18, Saturday, 4pm

Metro East Mall
Feb. 25, Saturday, 4pm

Market! Market!
Feb. 26, Sunday, 4pm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Charter change seen crucial to ratings upgrade

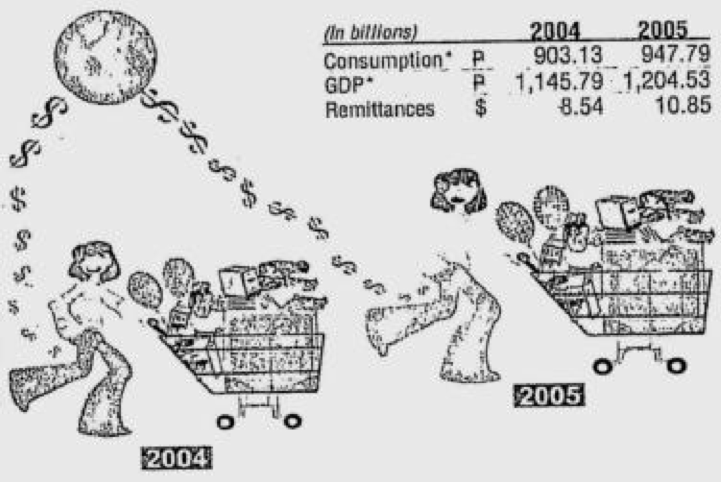
INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Personal consumption slows down

Despite a surge in overseas remittances to $10.85 billion in 2005, consumer spending growth slowed down to 4.9 percent from 5.8 percent in 2004 due to higher prices of goods and services. Consumption comprised nearly 80 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

(In billions)		2004	2005
Consumption*	P	903.13	947.79
GDP*	P	1,145.79	1,204.53
Remittances	$	8.54	10.85



Maricar D. Tolosa PDI Research
Sources: National Statistical Coordination Board, PDI archives
*At constant 1985 prices

As uncertainty on fiscal front eases

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES MAY MERIT A ONE-NOTCH SOVEREIGN CREDit-rating upgrade from one or two global rating agencies as early as the third quarter of this year once a clearer Charter change path shapes up, investment banking giant Credit Suisse predicted.

In a report titled "Philippines: Let's Do the Cha-Cha" dated Feb. 1, the bank said a Charter change was bound to happen—either through a long-winding congressional debate that could reach the Supreme Court or through a People's Initiative that could be held as early as this May.

As the government proved its resolve to shore up its bleeding finances with the increase in the value-added tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent, Credit Suisse said the uncertainty on the fiscal front was abating.

"Investors over the next two quarters are likely to then turn their attention to the process and timing of Charter change to create a parliamentary form of government," Credit Suisse analyst Sailesh Jha said in the report.

"We foresee limited political risks over the next six to nine months and remain bullish on the Philippines," Jha said.

The bullish assessment assumes, however, that the government would meet expected revenues from the VAT reform program. Otherwise, Credit Suisse said a sovereign rating upgrade may not come until next year.

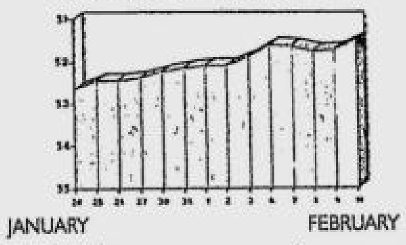
"The most significant downside risk that we foresee on the fiscal front is that VAT revenue collections come in below target from April onwards," the bank said.

It noted that the first two months of the implementation of the VAT rate increase in February and March were likely to be prone to teething problems and reliable VAT revenue data may

CHARTER/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

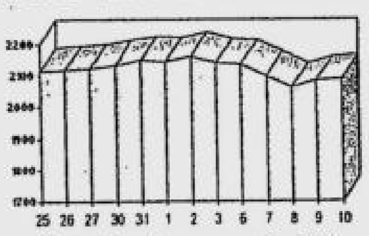


P51.48 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 10, 2006

¥117.59 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 10, 2006

GOLD: $557.50-558.00
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 10, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B8)

Stocks to consolidate

CONFLICTING SIGNALS SENT BY THE world's two most influential credit-rating firms may prompt the local stock market to consolidate this week as investors wait for clearer signals from other credit watchers.

STOCKS/ B3

WHAT'S INSIDE

Greggy + Ricky /B5

Manila Water spared from paying '06 taxes /B14

Gov't drops plan to raise import duties

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MALACAÑANG IS EXPECTED TO KEEP import duties at current levels as a comprehensive review of tariffs winds down and as free trade agreements near full implementation in 2010.

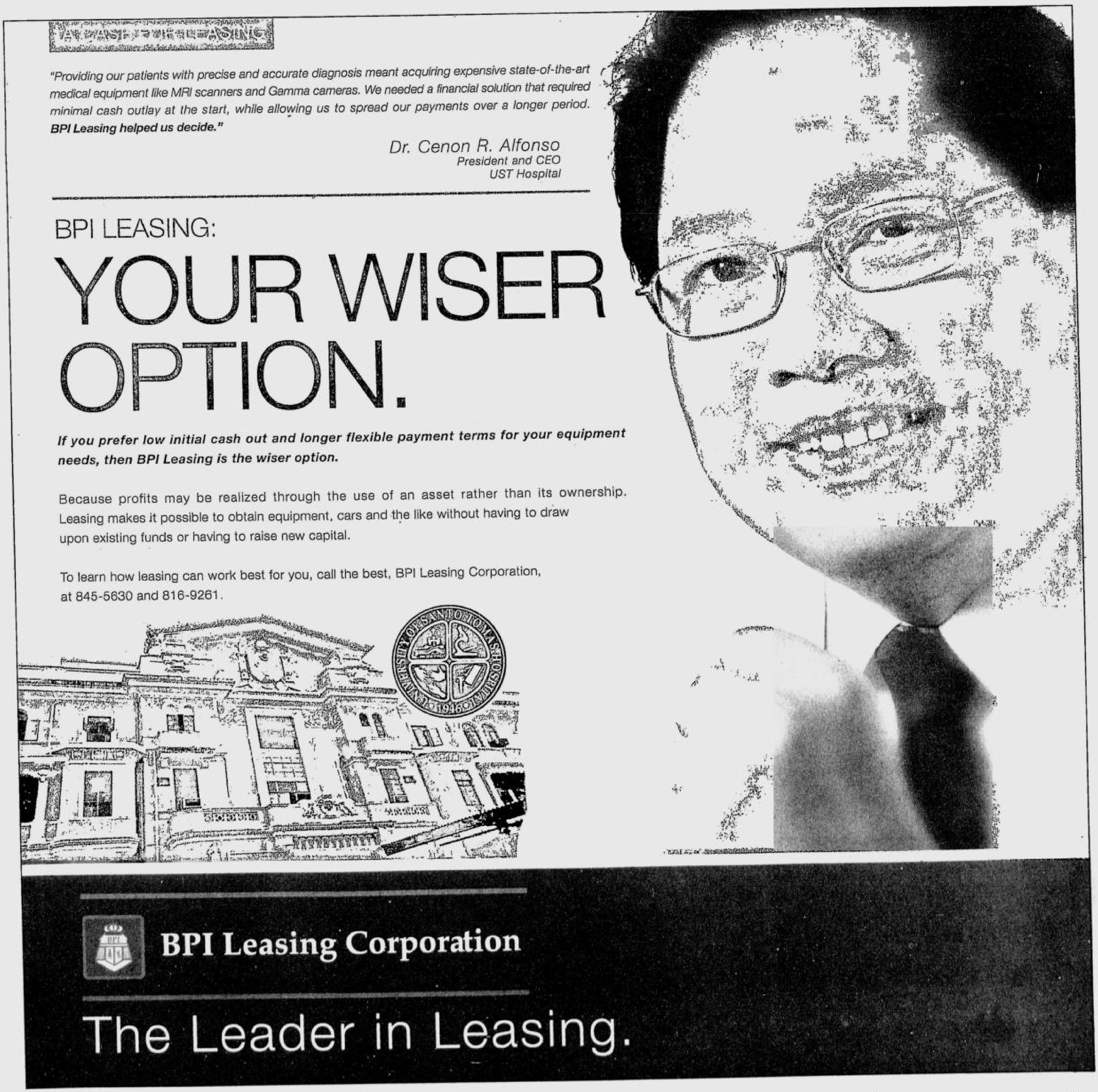
According to a source at the Cabinet-level Committee on Tariffs and Related Matters, the CTRM had carried all the recommendations of a high-level technical working group, including maintaining the existing tariff regime.

"The (working group) also suggested to hold the next review in 2009 instead of making reviews for every two-year periods," the official said.

"There are always three options during a review—raising tariffs which is difficult considering the thrusts of the World Trade Organization and of bilateral and regional trade agreements; bringing them down in preparation for full free trade, and maintaining current rates for a sudden drop once free trade is in effect," the source added.

The official said multilateral lending institutions had been urging the government to spell out a clear tariff

GOV'T/ B8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Public sector debt climbed to P5.5T as of Sept. 2005

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S OUTSTANDING public sector debt (OPSD) inched up to P5.5 trillion as of end-September last year, as the national government and state-owned firms continued to borrow money to cover their budget deficits.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that the latest OPSD—the combined liabilities of the national government, government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), social security institutions, government financial institutions (GFIs) and local government units—was 0.2 percent, or P9.4 billion, higher than the P5.49 trillion recorded as of end-June last year.

But while the debt figure grew, the expansion had started to decelerate. The P5.5-trillion OPSD as of the third quarter last year was equivalent to 105.3 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

The OPSD-to-GDP ratio stood at 107.8 percent as of the end of June last year.

According to DOF figures, domestic debt accounted for P1.9 trillion of the OPSD, while foreign obligations had the bigger share of P3.6 trillion.

Of the OPSD, liabilities of the national government stood at P4 trillion, or 3.3 percent higher than the P3.9 trillion recorded as of end-June. The national government's debt was equivalent to 77 percent of GDP.

The rise in the debt of the national government resulted from the increase in the volume of government securities sold to domestic investors. The national government had to finance a deficit of P146.5 billion last year.

But DOF projections showed that the national government debt-to-GDP ratio would record this year its first drop since 2001 amid a tightening budget deficit. The national government debt-to-GDP ratio is estimated to fall to 74.1 percent this year.

The Arroyo administration has adopted a fiscal reform program, under which the national government's deficit should drop to zero by 2008. With a zero deficit, the DOF said, the national government expects its debt levels to decline.

Debt of monitored government-owned and controlled corporations reached P1.5 trillion, or 0.9 percent higher than the figure recorded as of end-June.

The increase in the debt of state-owned firms was accounted for largely by the growth in the liabilities of the National Power Corp. (Napocor) and the National Food Authority (NFA).

Debt of social security institutions, including pension fund managers SSS and GSIS, reached P13.6 billion, or 19 percent higher than the P11.4 billion as of the second quarter.

Debts of GFIs stood at P1.5 trillion, or 3.9 percent lower than the second-quarter level. GFIs include the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, etc.

Bullish markets, empty pockets

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

NEWS OVER THE WEEKEND HERALDED the peso's climb to 51.48 to the US dollar as the markets closed last Friday, its highest finish since August 2002. The new high was attributed to the upgrade by Standard and Poor's of the country's credit ratings outlook from "negative" to "stable."

Meanwhile, the local stock market has been in a generally upbeat mood since the year started, although recent movements indicate a moderation of the bullish mood. On the bond market front, spreads on Philippine government bonds have been tightening, and have been reduced to less than half their level last year.

Improved confidence

I know that last statement is Greek to many of my regular readers. For the many who have asked me to write in even plainer English than I already try to do, this means that people lending money to the Philippine government by buying its longer term IOU notes are more willing to take a lower interest on their money.

The "spread" refers to the additional interest fetched by those IOUs on top of usual reference rates. A common reference is the interest paid on US Treasury bills, because these are widely considered "safe" investments in the global bond market.

Higher spreads indicate that people consider it riskier to lend to our government, thereby requiring a higher yield on their money to compensate for the additional risk they are taking (the "risk premium").

Well, this spread has narrowed from last year's 485 basis points (that is, 4.85 percentage points on top of the rate on US Treasury notes), down to 205 basis points (2.05 percentage points). This implies that there's greater confidence that the government can pay up on its debts.

Life getting worse?

All these could be seen as good news, as they appear to indicate a positive view on our economy's general outlook.

It means that people both in and out of the Philippines are putting more stakes in the country, by keeping more of their money in the form of pesos or peso-denominated financial assets like stocks in Filipino companies and Philippine government bonds. This implies that they must believe the economy is headed for better times.

In the case of government bonds, it means at the very least that people out there believe in the government's improved capacity to pay back its debts, period. This can but need not reflect their expectations on the general outlook on the economy; after all, lenders simply care about getting their money back.

On the other hand, other indicators tell us that life is getting worse for Filipinos. The Social Weather Stations' (SWS) hunger index reached a record high of 16.7 percent in December. Its self-rated poverty index climbed to 57 percent in the fourth quarter of 2005, a big jump from the 49 percent posted in the third quarter.

AC Nielsen reported a recent decline in consumer confidence from where it was in mid-2005. Certain indicators of health, nutrition and education (e.g. dropout rates) have reportedly turned for the worse in most recent data.

Many other casual indicators and anecdotal evidence point to a general feeling that the average Filipino may have become worse off compared to a year ago, and does not expect things to get better soon.

Glaring 'disconnect'

In short, the financial markets may be booming, but people's lives may be worsening. Further highlighting the contradiction, the government's statistics on the fourth quarter performance of the economy reported a higher-than-expected economic growth rate in the fourth quarter of 2005. There is, as some observers put it, a glaring "disconnect" between the financial markets and the macroeconomic data on one hand, and the real economy and people's economic well-being on the other.

Do the financial market players out there know something ordinary Filipinos don't?

One can begin to understand the contradiction when we realize that the supposed "good news" isn't exactly all that good. For example, I have already explained that the strong peso is good news to some, but bad news to others ("Stronger peso: good or bad?" NFL, 1-9-06).

A strong stock market is obviously of no direct benefit to the multitude of Filipinos, as it is mainly those with savings and excess purchasing power who can afford to invest in the stock market and benefit from its upswings. Record remittances may infuse our economy with much needed foreign exchange, but behind this may be greater hardship that has driven more Filipinos to seek employment abroad—as data indeed show a significant rise in OFW deployments.

The lower-than-programmed government budget deficit was obtained at the expense of lower allocations for vital social services especially health and education.

Foreign funds

Closer study also shows that our bullish markets are mainly responding to the surge in global funds flowing to the region as a whole. In "Unwarranted gloating" (NFL, 11-21-05), I explained why there is simply too much money out there looking for a place to go, leading to the rush of funds into the whole region—and certainly not just into the Philippines. Our market is so tiny relative to the magnitude of those footloose funds.

Little wonder, then, how we can have such bullish markets amid empty pockets. *(Questions and comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu)*

Charter . . .

From page B1

thus only be available from April onwards.

With the focus shifting toward forming a parliamentary form of government, Credit Suisse said it believed the risk of Congress being dissolved could rise. It said the timing of the dissolution of Congress could be as early as the third quarter of this year and a transitional parliament could be put in place subsequently.

"The process may face headwind at times and may create jitters in financial markets, but these are likely to be short-lived," the report said.

Credit Suisse had drawn up three scenarios on how a Charter change could be invoked, but noted that the easiest path was the most unlikely to happen:

- In the most optimistic scenario, both the House of Representatives and the Senate vote to approve the bill;
- The House of Representatives passes the bill, but the Senate rejects it. The Senate then goes to the Supreme Court, claiming the bill is unconstitutional. As a result, the Supreme Court issues a temporary restraining order (TRO), as in the case of the VAT bill in June 2005. Eventually, the Supreme Court could lift the TRO, deeming the bill legal, and the Charter change is done; or,
- The Charter change is passed through a People's Initiative.

"We believe a People's Initiative may be one of the important avenues for implementing Charter change. A People's Initiative is analogous to a referendum and has to be requested by grass roots organizations and not either chamber of Congress," the report said, noting that the ruling by the People's Initiative on the Charter change may supersede that of the Supreme Court.

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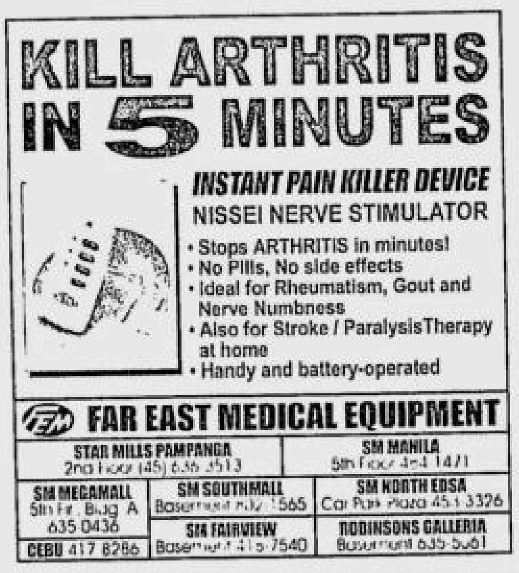

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Stocks to consolidate

From page B1

"Investors might seek indications if another international rating agency (possibly FitchRatings) can break the impasse between S&P and Moody's ratings on the Philippines, while waiting for other justifications that could lift barometers higher this week," online broker 2TradeAsia.com said in a briefing note to its clients.

The brokerage firm advised its clients to "buy on dips and hold" with the Philippine Stock Exchange index likely to find support at the 2,060-2,070 level and resistance at 2,100-2,130.

Last week, the Phisix fell 2.5 percent or a total of 53 points to 2,085.28 prompted by a massive sell-off in market heavyweight PLDT.

The sell-off came after US-based investment bank Morgan Stanley downgraded PLDT's stock on fears of weaker earnings prospects in the face of rising competition.

PLDT touched a low of P1,675 a share after hitting a high only the previous week, although the stock managed to stabilize at P1,750 last Friday.

Nonetheless, last week's weakness in the stock market may be a prelude to a further push upward.

"We are inclined to view the recent weakness as part of a much-awaited technical breather, following the market's rise early this year," 2TradeAsia.com said. "Any lull or weakness should be taken in a positive light, as these provide windows to position in stocks expected to ride with improved economic growth outlook for 2006."

Daxim L. Lucas

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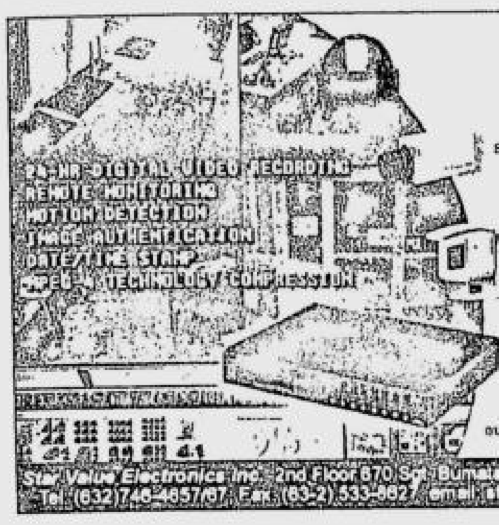

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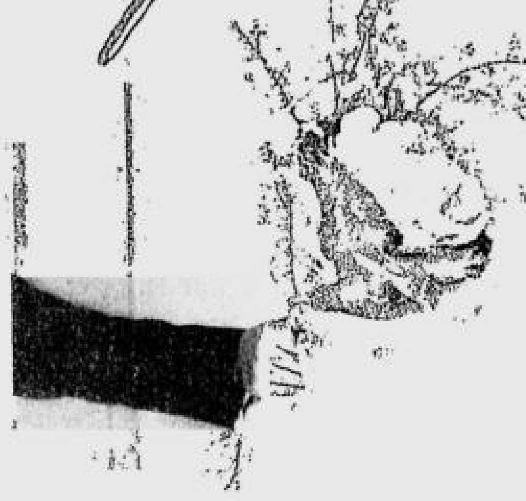

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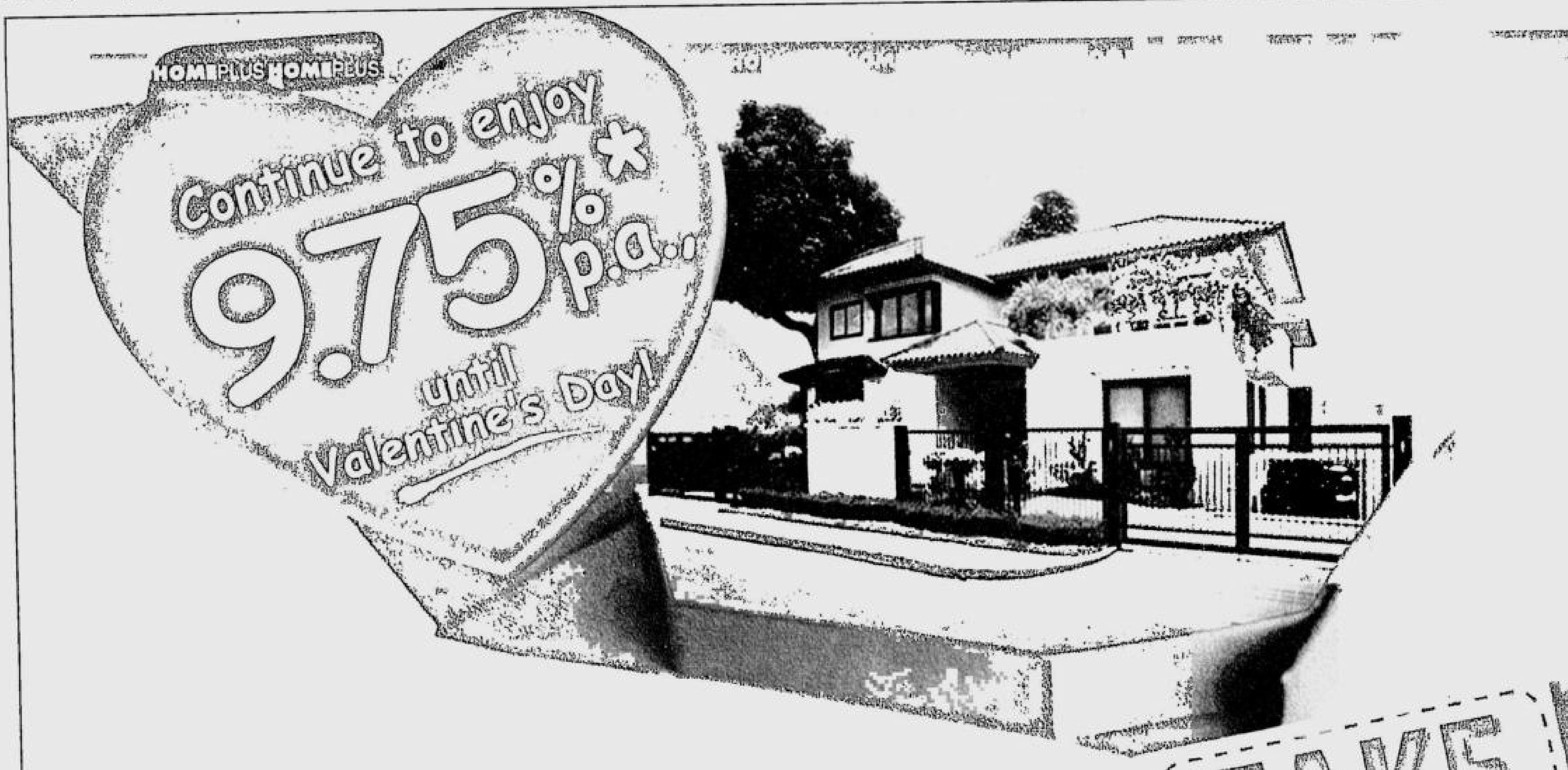

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Gov't drafting rules to regulate cooperatives; public hearings set

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT IS SET TO issue rules governing cooperatives in the country, a move aimed at shaping up delinquent cooperatives and boosting microcredit.

The National Credit Council (NCC) of the Department of Finance and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) has started a series of nationwide public hearings to discuss the draft Manual of Rules and Regulations.

"The lack of prudential rules and regulations has been identified as one of the major reasons for the many failures in the credit cooperative sector," the DOF said in a statement.

The DOF noted that of the over 700,000 registered cooperatives, more than half have failed or are no longer operating.

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Exporters earn ₱135M from holiday decor fair

ChristmasWorld earnings up 58% from 2005

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL EXPORTERS EARNED ABOUT P135 million or $2.6 million during the global trade fair for holiday decor and products for festive occasions held last month in Frankfurt, Germany.

The Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, which organized the Philippine participation in ChristmasWorld 2006, said the combined functionality and quality design of local firms' products drew the attention of European buyers.

Citem said this year's earnings from ChristmasWorld were up 58 percent from the $1.6 million earned in 2005.

Eleven companies joined the Frankfurt fair along with at least a thousand exhibitors from 39 countries.

They include Balasi Export; Buena Mano Crafts, Inc.; Craftsite Export Company; L&A Designs; Liman Designs; Magellan Manufacturers Marketing Corporation; Philippine Concorde Trading Corporation; Philippine Treasures Inc.; Sally's Crafts; Sanport Craft International, and; Sarilinlikha Novelties.

Trade Assistant Secretary Fe Agoncillo-Reyes, who also heads Citem, said the Filipino firms took advantage of the country's reputation as a rich hub of natural materials such as coconut palm wood, narra to volcanic ashes and rainforest vines.

Reyes said buyers always looked for products with new design, specifically new design applications using natural materials and products that are functional.

"The holiday decor industry's competitive advantage lies in the inherent creativity of the Filipino manufacturers," she said. "We are well positioned to niche on design-oriented, functional lifestyle products."

Reyes said bestsellers during the show were Philippine-made wire Christmas trimmings and ornaments; Christmas decor trimmings, votives and cone trees, paper mache gift boxes, Christmas tree trimmings and velvet decorative boxes, angels made of sinamay and abaca, and nativity sets.

There are more than 2,000 local firms engaged in the holiday decor industry, employing about 50,000 workers and 250,000 indirect workers.

Manufacturers and producers of Christmas/holiday decor are widely dispersed throughout the country especially in areas where there are abundant raw materials such as Bicol, Quezon, Pampanga, Cebu, Negros, and Manila.

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PBCom Signature Trust Fund	10.97%	7.88%	4.57%

The investors buy units of participation based on the Net Asset Value Per Unit (NAVPU). The assets are priced daily on a marked-to-market basis since the Fund's launch on August 4, 2005.

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Historical Performance	Q4 2005 (Annualized)	Q3 2005 (Annualized)	31-Dec-05 Absolute Yield since Inception
PBCom Winner Dollar Fund	48.96%	257.86%	13.87%

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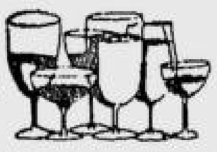

Victor C. Agustin

IT LOOKS LIKE GREGORIO "Greggy" Araneta III has gotten his groove back.

It was not so long ago that Araneta had to let go of the family's Ayala Alabang residence in favor of a bank; now, the Marcos son-in-law has resurrected and acquired a new spread in Forbes Park no less.

Neighbors were surprised to see Greggy frequenting 5 Intsia Road, the former home of BLTB heiress Dolly Potenciano, only to be informed by the household staff that the Marcos son-in-law had indeed acquired the 1,915-square-meter property.

Araneta, through an intermediary, denied having acquired the Potenciano house, adding that he never even knew that the house was for sale.

But, according to a neighbor, the Marcos son-in-law had also expressed interest in acquiring the neighboring lot, at 3 Intsia Road, telling the property owner, the Silverios, he wanted to join the number 3 lot with his newly acquired number 5 property.

The number 5 Intsia property was foreclosed by Allied Bank from the Potencianos after financial troubles crippled the family's pioneering bus company.

It was not clear how much the Lucio Tan-bank finally disposed of the Potenciano property, which has a 40-meter-long pool. It had been on the market since 2001.

At an ongoing average price of P40,000 sqm, the Intsia lot alone—neighbors incidentally include former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez and architect Gerry Contreras—would be worth P76.6 million.

The Ayala Alabang property, on the other hand, is, at a sprawling 6,909 sqm, one of the choice real estate that Chinabank has been unable to unload also for some time now.

The asking price is a steep P127.38 million, and Chinabank is said to be now considering breaking up the property into six lots for greater marketability.

Meanwhile, Greggy's good friend and nearly brother-in-law, polo player Ricardo "Ricky" Silverio Jr., has a real pressing need to find a new home.

According to the grapevine, Ricky's Tuscany condo has been foreclosed by Ricky's former business partner and polo buddy, Banco Filipino's Albert "Bobby" Aguirre.

The threat of eviction was what apparently prompted the troubled son of Toyota pioneer, now Bulacan Mayor Ricardo Silverio Sr., to take over the Urdaneta Village house of his dad while the old man was away for the Christmas holidays.

Shocked at the brazenness and the bizarreness of his son's latest behavior, the older Silverio has even gone to the extent of pleading with Ricky's wife and friends to prevail on his 57-year-old son to seek medical help.

Instead of a doctor, Greggy lent one of his trusted lawyers to help Ricky fight his 76-year-old father and his second wife, Rep. Lorna Silverio, to cash out his inheritance now.

Mall in legal mire

THE PLANNED SM mall in Sto. Tomas, Batangas, has been caught in the political and courtroom fight between Gov. Armando Sanchez and the camp of former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

The SM Group has, for all intents and purposes, acquired nearly two hectares of land in Sto. Tomas from the property owner, who happens to be the incumbent governor.

Unfortunately, the property was bought by Sanchez, long before he entered politics, from the Dimayugas, who happen to be staunch political allies of his rival, Perez.

Perez's former chief of staff, Chona Dimayuga, is now claiming that the road lot frontage is not part of the property sold to Sanchez, a claim the governor finds preposterous since he never dealt with the female lawyer in the sale at all.

The Dimayuga seller, unfortunately, has been confined for some time now in a rehabilitation center, with the facility's director refusing to allow the patient to testify, despite a court order from Judge Hermenegildo Lacap.

Panasonic gets toast

AFTER stopping the local assembly of TV sets in 2004, Panasonic Manufacturing has also decided, effective June, to stop making oven toasters, electric irons and electric stoves in its Taytay, Rizal plant.

"This decision is due to the continuing decline in the market share of said products and the (in)ability of the company to cope with the unabated increase in raw material prices," Panasonic said in a statement.

The good news is that the Taytay plant remains Panasonic's regional export base for window-type airconditioners, as well as for the manufacture of refrigerators and washing machines for the domestic market.

As for TV sets, Panasonic now simply imports them from manufacturing affiliates in Malaysia and Japan, with the latter supplying the higher-end LCD models.

Snail mail gets crawling

WHAT'S happening with the Makati central post office?

From Jan. 18 posting, it took the mailman three weeks to deliver Citibank credit card statements to a Legaspi Village building, less than a kilometer away.

Because of the delay, the credit card bills were delivered past the payment deadline.

Heard through the grapevine

THE ESTRANGED wife of Antonio Garcia, Leah Orosa, now based in California with her kids, has contacted a local lawyer in her planned child-support case against the Chemphil chair.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

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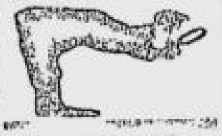

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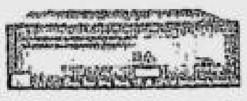

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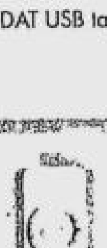

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Uniwide, Suy Sing OK lease agreement

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE UNIWIDE GROUP HAS agreed to lease out its supermarket business to Binondo-based wholesaler Suy Sing Commercial Corp. to stem further losses, Uniwide receiver Julio Elamparo told the INQUIRER.

Elamparo said that with the lease agreement, Uniwide would "effectively cease its supermarket operations" which have suffered heavy losses.

A lease contract signed last month, he said, would allow Suy Sing to operate Uniwide supermarkets in Caloocan, Coastal Mall, Las Piñas , Novaliches, Sucat and Tarlac.

The arrangement will raise for Uniwide rental income of P3-P4 million a month.

Elemparo said there would be retrenchment of employees at Uniwide to further cut costs.

Suy Sing Commercial, reputedly the country's biggest wholesaler-distributor of consumer goods, is led by businessman Ang Tin Yu.

Uniwide is under a 15-year financial rehabilitation that is aimed at wiping out its debts and reviving its retail operations after getting knocked down during the 1997 Asian Financial crisis.

Uniwide has managed to pay so far P4 billion of its P7.5 billion debts with secured creditors.

Some of its creditors—Philippine National Bank, Allied Bank and ING Bank, which have combined exposure in Uniwide of P1.3 billion, have yet to accept the company's rehabilitation plan.

Uniwide also has P2.5 billion in total obligations to unsecured creditors.

To further curb financial bleeding, Uniwide closed last month its branches at Edsa Central and Cabuyao.

Wenphil gets new 20-yr franchise

WENPHIL CORP. HAS BEEN granted another 20-year exclusive franchise contract by Wendy's International Inc.

The deal was awarded three years ahead of schedule, Wenphil said in a statement.

Wenphil Corp. is the second largest franchisee of Wendy's in Asia. It now has 42 outlets in Metro Manila and nearby cities.

With the new contract, the company said it was expecting a healthy business in the Philippines this year.

In the same statement, the company said it won the prestigious Wendy Award in the recent Wendy's International Convention in Las Vegas Nevada. Wenphil Corp. president Yvette Pardo-Orbeta received the award.

The award is presented yearly to franchisees that excel in all areas of the restaurant business. Wendy Award winners have high operational standards, a commitment to training and development, and proven success in neighborhood and local store marketing.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTE-INFRASTRUCTURE
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Province of Cebu, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Infrastructure (BAC-INFRA), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	Proposed Construction of Daanbantayan Roro Port
Location	Maya, Daanbantayan, Cebu
Brief Description	Construction of Roll-On-Roll-Off Port
Approved Budget for the Contract	P14,999,598.45
Contract Duration	180 Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC-INFRA will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC-INFRA will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statements and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of BAC-INFRA activities is as follows:

BAC-INFRA Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	February 6 & 13, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	February 6-13, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	February 13, 2006
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	February 16, 2006
5. Issuance of Bidding Documents	February 20, 2006
6. Pre-bid Conference	February 22, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	March 7, 2006

The BAC-INFRA Secretariat will issue to prospective bidder's Eligibility Forms at the Provincial Engineer's Office, Legislative Building, Capitol Compound, Cebu City, upon their submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of non-refundable amount of Fifty Pesos (P50.00) to the Cash Division, Provincial Treasurer's Office. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to, and may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check from, the aforementioned address. For further inquiries, one may call the Secretariat at (032) 416-5400 local 110.

The BAC-INFRA will issue Bidding Documents including Plans and Specifications only to bidder's declared by the BAC-INFRA to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) to the Cash Division, Provincial Treasurer's Office.

The Province of Cebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids and, reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not to award the contract.

(Sgd.) EDUARDO T. HABIN
Chairman

(PDI–Feb. 6 & 13, 2006)

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF CAPIZ
City of Roxas, Province of Capiz
(036) 6210-036 Local 254
Fax No.: (036) 6210-036 Local 158

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Capiz thru its BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC) invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and if found eligble, to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Contract	: Concreting of Timpas-Malapad Cogon Road Phase-II, Panitan, Capiz
Location	Panitan, Capiz
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	18,700,000.00
Source of fund	: General Fund

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Starting of submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application of Eligibility	Feb. 13, 2006
2. Issuance of Bid Documents	Feb. 14, 2006
3. Pre-Bid Conference	February 17, 2006
4. Opening of Bids	February 24, 2006

1. In order to qualify for participation in the public bidding, bidders should conform to all eligibility requirements as prescribed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Republic Act 9184.
2. The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility forms at Provincial General Services Office, Provincial Capitol , Roxas City upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of prescribed non-refundable fee of PESOS: Four Thousand Pesos (P4,000.00).
3. Bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the same address
4. Bidders shall drop their duly accomplished technical and financial proposals in two separate envelopes in the bid boxes before the deadline of submission of bids.
5. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in a form of cash and must be delivered to the PGSO on or before the bid closing date.
6. BAC Committee assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.
7. BAC Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure or not to award the contract; and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) DANTE B. BERMEJO
Chairman
BAC Committee

(PDI – February 13 & 15, 2006)

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TWO (2) PLANTATION MANAGER-DESIGNATE

- B.S. Agriculture or Forestry Graduate
- Has good business sense and cost management skills
- Proficient in oral and written communication
- Highly organized, creative and has a keen sense for details and accuracy
- Can relate people at different levels
- Has expertise in planning and control of operations
- Knowledgeable in labor laws & other relevant government regulations
- Experience in plantation management is an advantage
- A professional manager with the ability to motivate, persuade and lead people
- Age not more than 47 years old

TWO (2) SENIOR FIELD ASSISTANTS

- B.S. Agriculture or Forestry Graduate
- Self-driven, self-motivated and highly organized
- Detail-oriented with a keen sense for accuracy
- Analytical and knowledgeable in interpreting statistics
- Has good interpersonal and communication skills
- Aggressive, ambitious and has potential to assume Management position
- Age not more than 40 years old

TEN (10) FIELD SUPERVISORS

- B.S. Agriculture or Forestry Graduate
- A team player with the ability to motivate, persuade and lead people
- Self-driven, self-motivated and ambitious for higher position
- Results-oriented, dynamic and can perform effectively under extreme pressures
- Good in both oral and written communications
- Age not more than 30 years old

TWO (2) ACCOUNTANTS

- B.S. Accounting Graduate preferably CPAs
- Highly organized and has a keen sense for details and accuracy with ability to perform effectively under extreme pressures
- Proficient in financial analysis and structuring of financial packages
- Computer-literate and with knowledge in auditing procedures
- Has in-depth knowledge in purchasing and procurement procedures
- Age not more than 40 years old

TWO (2) MILL MANAGER-DESIGNATE

- Licensed Mechanical, Chemical or Electrical Engineer
- Preferably a holder of boiler operations license
- Minimum of five years working experience with managerial capacity preferably in power or industrial processing plant
- Possesses good business sense and cost management skills
- With knowledge in environmental regulations and DOLE's Occupational Safety and Health Standards
- Possesses good communication skills both in oral and written English
- Computer-literate, knowledge in Autocad is an advantage
- Trained in Problem-Solving & Decision-Making and Management By Objectives
- Knowledgeable in production and process control
- Possesses good character, leadership skills and a team player
- Age not more than 47 years old

TWO (2) MILL ENGINEERS

- Licensed Mechanical, Chemical or Electrical Engineer
- Preferably a holder of boiler operations license
- Minimum of three years working experience with supervisory capacity preferably in power or industrial processing plant
- Must have experience in operation and maintenance of steam boilers, steam turbines, material conveying equipment, fans and blowers, and ohter standard factory equipment
- Highly organized, self-driven and self-motivated
- Must be familiar with DOLE Occupational and Safety Health Standards
- Possesses good communication skills both in oral and written English
- Computer-literate, Knowledgeable in Autocad is an advantage
- Knowledgeable in production and process control
- Possesses good character, leadership skills and a team player
- Age not more than 37 years old

THREE (3) LABORATORY ANALYSTS

- Licensed Chemical Engineer or Chemist
- Minimum of two years hand-on working experience in a factory laboratory
- Must be familiar with laboratory standards and practices
- Must have experience in boiler water analysis, water treatment, and waste water and process effluent analysis
- Computer-literate
- Age not more than 35 years old

Application letter with resumé and 2x2 ID picture may be sent to:

**API, Door 3, Granland Bldg.,
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E-mail address: bcwd2@skylnet.net

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Butuan City Water District hereby invites suppliers and distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid, in accordance with I.R.R. of R.A. 9184, for the supply and delivery of Brass Fittings, C.I. Combination Flange, C.I Valves & Fittings, G.I Pipes & Fittings and HDPE Pipes

PACKAGE 1. BRASS FITTINGS, ISO (4 Items)

Qty.	Description
2,048 Pcs.	Angle Meter Valve 25mmØ x 25mmØ
3,706 Pcs	Coupling 25mmØ
1,019 Pcs.	Coupling 32mmØ
1,763 Pcs	Union 25mmØ

ABC: Php 1,400,000.00 Bidding Fee: Php 1,500.00

PACKAGE 2. C .I. COMBINATION FLANGE, ISO (5 Items)
6 Pcs 110mmØ, 5 pcs 160mmØ 10 Pcs 25mmØ
10 Pcs 280mmØ, 10 Pcs 315mmØ
ABC: Php 600,000.00 Bidding Fee: Php 1,000.00

PACKAGE 3. C.I. VALVES & FITTINGS (8 Items)
5 Pcs Air Release Valve 50mmØ
1 Pc Check Valve, 225mmØ F/F BNG
2 Pcs. Gate Valve, 100mmØ F/F BNG NRS
2 Pcs. Hydrant Head, 100mmØ Residential
2 Pcs. Mechanical Wye 225mmØ x 225mmØ
SPLIT TEE (3 Items) 10 Pcs. 160mmØ x 110mmØ;
11 Pcs. 225mmØ x 110mmØ;
11 Pcs. 225mmØ x 160mmØ
ABC: Php 700,000.00 Bidding Fee: Php 1,000.00

PACKAGE 4. G.I. PIPES SCH. 40 & G.I. FITTINGS (7 Items)
216 Pcs. Pipe 1"Ø x 6m; 866 Pcs Bushing Reducer 1"Ø x ¾" Ø; 2,049 Pcs. Elbow 1"Ø x 90°,
8,500 Pcs. Plug ¾" Ø, 4,520 Pcs. Tee Reducer 1"Ø x ¾" Ø; 2,560 Pcs. Tee 1"Ø x 1"Ø,
1,640 Pcs. Union 1"Ø
ABC: Php 593,000.00 Bidding Fee: Php 1,000.00

PACKAGE 5. Black HDPE PIPES, 25mmØ; 32mmØ & Blue HDPE PIPES 110mmØ, SDR 11, ISO (3 Items)
297 Rolls 25mmØ x 150m; 190 Rolls 32mmØ x 90m,
1,066 Pcs. 110mmØ x 6m
ABC Php 3,720,000.00 Bidding Fee. Php 2,000.00

PACKAGE 6. Blue HDPE PIPES, 225mØ, 280mmØ & 315mmØ, SDR 11, ISO (3 Items)
1,221 Pcs 225mmØ x 6m, 10 Pcs 280mmØ x 6m
10 Pcs 315mmØ x 6m
ABC: Php 11,730,000.00 Bidding Fee: Php 3,000.00

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased per package by interested Bidders upon payment of a non refundable fee as indicated per package. The method of payment is CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidders or his authorized representative.

For Package 5, interested applicants shall submit to the BAC Secretariat, during its business hours, one (1) roll 25mmØ x 150m and one (1) roll 32mmØ x 90m HDPE Pipes as samples, which shall be subjected to Hydro testing on Working & Bursting Pressure and Measurement Tests. Deadline for submission of samples shall be on February 20, 2006. Only applicants duly notified that their samples passed the test are qualified to purchase bidding documents and participate in the bidding.

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at the Training Hall of BCWD Admin. Building on the following dates

February 22, 2006	9:00 A.M. – Packages 1 & 4
	2:00 P.M – Packages 2 & 3
March 1, 2006	9:00 A.M. – Packages 5 & 6

Submission and opening of sealed bids shall be at the same venue, which shall follow on:

March 6, 2006	9:00 A.M. – Packages 1 & 4
	2:00 P.M. – Packages 2 & 3
March 13, 2006	9:00 A.M. – Packages 5 & 6

Butuan City Water District reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or formality therein, to assume no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of their bids, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) JORGE L. GUDUYO, C.E.
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – February 6 & 13, 2006)

Final solution to CTPL mess stalemated

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE FINAL SOLUTION TO THE LONG-FESTERING CTPL (Compulsory Third Party Liability) mess is at a stalemate. We vehicle owners will continue to suffer, hopefully not for too long.

Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo has designed an excellent plan she calls the Clearing House. The players may be the same, but the ballgame is entirely new. And it is enthusiastically backed by all the non-life companies, the brokers and agents.

The Clearing House uses the least amount of human intervention (the main cause of all the problems) by applying the latest in information technology extensively.

The vehicle owner sees his favorite agent and pays the premium and taxes. The agent then goes into the Internet, relays to his bank the name of the owner and the license plate of the vehicle, and instructs the bank to debit the premium and taxes against his account.

If the agent does not have a desktop, he can do business at an Internet café.

The printout generated at the agent's office is the policy or Certificate of Cover (COC). The agent or the owner brings the COC to the LTO, which is on-line with the bank. After the COC is verified at the LTO's terminal, the registration certificate is issued.

The bank automatically credits the premium and the taxes to the account of the insurance company. The taxes are credited to BIR right away.

But the Clearing House cannot get off the ground because the GSIS insists it can do a better job. It wants to be the sole CTPL supplier all over the country. At the time when government corporations are being privatized, GSIS wants to take over the entire CTPL business and run a strict monopoly.

The main reason why the GSIS thinks it can do the job is its total assets of P506 billion. But the 2004 Commission on Audit report shows a figure of only P280 billion. The one-year jump of P226 billion is beyond belief.

A footnote from the COA report says, "Of the 908 reported claims, 365 have no loss reserve set-up resulting in the understatement of the reported losses with corresponding understatement of the provision for unadjusted losses." In well-run insurance companies, once a claim is filed, the size of the claim is estimated and a corresponding reserve is set up. But the reserve cuts down the net worth. Obviously, the 2004 net worth is bloated. Nonetheless, the net worth is still bigger than that of the entire private sector non-life industry put together.

From the start, the GSIS has been set up as a strict monopoly. Originally intended to insure the lives of government employees on a mandatory basis, the GSIS tentacles have spread to cover government properties, build-operate-transfer (BOT) contracts, surety bonds on government projects, and pre-need plans. Now, the GSIS, in its supposed desire to help collect taxes and insure the long-victimized motor vehicle owner, wants to monopolize the CTPL business. Who is the vehicle owner who wants to tangle with a strict monopoly?

The strict monopoly can not be set up unless the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) issues a decree that would require all vehicle owners to buy their

QUESTIONS/ B13

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****

KOREA INT'L PACKAGING EXHIBITION
(KOREA PACK 2006)
DATE : March 21-24TH
VENUE : KINTEX,Goyang City, Korea
EXHIBIT: Packaging machines,materials, food packaging, pharmaceutical/cosmetic manufacturing facilities, technologies and logistics, and etc.

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PREVIEW IN DAEGU
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REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FEB. 20, 2006

****

BUSAN INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SHOW
(BIMOS 2006)
DATE : April 27-May 7th
VENUE : BEXCO, Busan, Korea
EXHIBIT : automobiles, autoparts and accessories, transport eqpt.and etc.
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PAL to make Riyadh route viable

Concession sought from Arroyo gov't as condition for continuing flights

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES MAY CONTINUE FLYING to Saudi Arabia if the Arroyo administration secures a deal for PAL to include Dubai as a passenger pick up and drop off point as part of its Riyadh or Jeddah route, the airline's top official said.

"We believe that a small window of opportunity exists to save PAL's RP-KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) flights, if we are able to secure the necessary rights to operate a Manila-Dubai-KSA," said PAL president Jaime Bautista in his letter to Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza and the country's air panel.

Bautista said a fifth freedom right to Dubai would give PAL "a fighting chance to bring down losses to a more manageable level." Fifth freedom is a right given to a country's airline to drop-off and pick-up passengers from a middle point before proceeding to the actual destination.

"We urgently appeal to the government, through the DOTC and the RP Air Panel to assist us in pursuing this opportunity with KSA authorities as it is perhaps the last chance to save our flag carrier's direct air links to the OFWs in KSA," the PAL president told Mendoza.

Bautista said PAL had discussed with Saudi Airlines a plan to do the Dubai stopover.

But the fifth freedom right must be negotiated on a government level, he explained.

"We will exert all efforts to maintain our flag carrier's direct link with Saudi Arabia," said Tomas Mañalac, executive director of the Civil Aeronautics Board.

PAL is scheduled to suspend its thrice-weekly flights to Riyadh by March 2 and thrice-weekly flights to Kuala Lumpur by Wednesday, Feb. 15.

The airline said it had been sustaining huge losses from the two routes, more so with the Manila-Riyadh where it had been losing $10 million (roughly P540 million) a year.

PAL's yield from the Riyadh route was eaten up by high fuel costs and its inability to compete with Gulf carriers that have been offering cheaper fares.

The flag carrier's decision to stop serving its last Middle East route was strongly criticized as it would cut the direct link of more than one million Filipinos working in Saudi Arabia.

"We were trying to maintain Riyadh to give our OFWs the seats but since the Middle Eastern carriers have been serving the route well, then we can suspend operations," said Bautista in an earlier interview.

Saudi Airlines flies nine times a week to the Philippines from Riyadh and Jeddah.

PAL said that six Middle Eastern carriers already operate 43 flights weekly between Manila, Cebu and nine points in the region. On top of that, five East Asian carriers serve the Gulf market from the Philippines with 33 flights weekly.

Since 2002, the Philippines had granted 800,000 annual capacity entitlements to Gulf carriers.

Bautista said PAL had kept the Riyadh flights as long as it could.

Cure raises capital to ₱2B

By Clarissa S. Batino

CONNECTIVITY UNLIMITED RESOURCES Inc., one of the four companies awarded a third-generation or 3G mobile phone license, has increased its authorized capital to P2 billion from P120 million.

Cure president Eric Recto said capital was increased in preparation for additional capital infusion among Cure shareholders and new investors as the company rolls out its 3G network.

The new player controlled by the group of former trade minister Roberto V. Ongpin had increased two weeks ago its paid-up capital to P450.82 million.

Cure is supposed to bring in Hong Kong's Hutchison Whampoa Ltd. as one of its major investors.

Recto, however, declined to confirm the entry of Hutchison.

Recto said the roll-out, testing and commissioning of the 3G network would take about a year for a start-up company.

The National Telecommunications Commission gave 3G players a year to start putting in place the needed telecommunications infrastructure.

Giants Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc. are preparing to offer 3G services as early as March this year.

Sun Cellular, on the other hand, would likely follow within the year.

Recto said Cure would cash in on its "late-mover advantage" by buying more reasonably-priced equipment and services.

An NTC official said one of the reasons why Cure was granted a 3G license was because it promised to bring in Hutchison, one of the active 3G operators worldwide controlled by Asian billionaire Li Ka Shing.

A news report from Hong Kong named Hutchison Telecommunications Intl. Ltd. as the vehicle that Hutchison Whampoa would use to invest in Cure.

The NTC has yet to award one more 3G license.

Fighting over the last slot are Bayan Telecommunications Inc., Multi-Media Telephony Inc. associated with Joey de Venecia, Next Mobile Inc., AZ Communications Inc. linked to Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco and Pacific Wireless Inc.

Multi-Media said China Investment Corp. would put in $20 million.

AZ Communications said it has Lucent Technologies as partner. Pacific Wireless, on the other hand, was reported to have a Malaysian 3G operator ready to jump on board.

G&W CLUB SHARES

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Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,150,000/Pls. Call*	Pls. Call
Alta Vista B/Corp.*	-	Pls. Call/330 000*
Baguio Country Club	-	500,000
Calatagan Golf	Pls. Call	40 000
Camp John Hay	-	200,000
Canlubang Golf	530 000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	120 000	-
Capitol Hills	70 000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,500 000	1,300,000
Celebrity Sports	120 000	100 000
City Sports Club Cebu	-	300,000
Club Filipino	140 000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	180 000	150,000/Pls. Call*/250,000**
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	65 000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	250 000	-
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	120,000/200 000*	150,000*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	300,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	11,500 000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,000 000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Southwoods A/B*	350,000/Pls. Call*	300,000/700,000*
Makati Sports Club	200 000	165,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	350 000	250,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	120,000/150 000*	90,000
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	150,000
Mt. Malarayat A	230 000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/400 000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	400 000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160 000	130,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*/250 000**	130,000*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	180,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	80 000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	80,000*
Spa & Lodge	530 000	-
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	1,100,000/1,600 000*
The Palms Country Club	550 000	350 000
Tagaytay Country Club	330 000	300 000
Tagaytay Highlands	730 000	650 000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	630,000
The Country Club	2,000 000	-
Tower Club	140 000	-
Valley Golf	200 000	190,000
Valle Verde Ind.	100 000	-
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CLUB PUNTA FUEGO	450K	COUNTRY CLUB TAGAYTAY	300K
EASTRIDGE B	120K	EAGLE RIDGE B	330K
EAGLERIDGE A	180K	EAGLE RIDGE C	350K
FOREST HILLS A/B	120/100K	FOREST HILLS A	80K
MAKATI SPORTS	180K	MAKATI SPORTS	160K
MANILA POLO	2.350M	MANILA GOLF IND	PLS. CALL
METRO CLUB	150K	MANILA GOLF CORP	PLS. CALL
ORCHARD A	160K	MANILA POLO	2.2M
PHIL COLUMBIAN	50K	MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	680K
RIVIERA A/B	60/170K	METRO CLUB	120K
ROCKWELL CLUB	230K	ORCHARD A	150K
ROYALE TAGAYTAY	80K	ORCHARD B	280K
SPA & LODGE	400K	QUEZON CITY SPORTS	130K
TAGAYTAY HIGLANDS	600K	ROCKWELL LEISURE CLUB	175K
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	650K	STA. ELENA B	1 450M
TOWER CLUB C	300K	THE PALMS COUNTRY CLUB	350K
VALLEY GOLF CLUB	230K	VALLEY GOLF	175K
VALLE VERDE	90K	VALLE VERDE	70K
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Please contact AMIE, VIRGIE OR REY
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Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,250,000	1,100,000
Anvaya Cove Beach & Nature Club	Please Call	
Baguio Country Club	550,000	500,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	20,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	120,000	60,000
Camp John Hay*	250,000	165,000
Canlubang	550,000	500,000
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,350,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	-
Club Filipino	140,000	100,000
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	130,000	90,000
Forest Hills "B"	200,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	170,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	11,500,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,000,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	Please Call
Manila Southwoods "A"	340,000	310,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	Please Call	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	400,000	-
Metroclub "A"	120,000	90,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	450,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	250,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	200,000	160,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	400,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	130,000
Rockwell	Please Call	-
Spa & Lodge	400,000	-
Sta. Elena "A"	1,300,000	1,100,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,600,000	1,500,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	310,000
Tagaytay Highlands	Please Call	680,000
Tagaytay Midlands	750,000	630,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	85,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	190,000	-
Valley Golf	220,000	200,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,350,000	6,000,000

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Stocks	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36	36	35	35	390,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	58.5	58	58.5	456,900
China Banking Corp.	610	610	610	610	900
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	63	63	62.5	62.5	46,300
International Exch. Bank	21.75	21.75	21.75	21.75	130,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31.5	32	31	31.5	689,300
Philippine National Bank	31	31.5	31	31	2,800
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	400
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.5	13.75	13.5	13.5	6,900
Security Bank Corp.	38	38.5	38	38.5	31,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	13,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3100	3150	3100	3150	2,780
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	146	146	146	146	11,200
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2170	2185	2170	2185	5,620
Ivantage Corp.	0.68	0.7	0.68	0.69	1,990,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	46.5	47	45.5	45.5	4,220,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45.5	45.5	42.5	44	853,500
Manila Electric Co. A	13.5	14	13.5	14	31,900
Manila Electric Co. B	20.25	20.25	20	20.25	268,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.2	4,375,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6	3,693,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	500,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	390,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	14,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21.25	21.25	20.75	20.75	38,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35.5	36	35	36	124,700
Pancake House Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.6	693,000
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	10,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.74	1.7	1.72	547,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62	62.5	61.5	62.5	74,600
San Miguel Corp. B	84	84.5	84	84.5	90,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	1,580,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.2	1.22	1.18	1.2	1,390,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	40,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	150,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	10,000
CHEMICALS					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	60,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	100,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	1,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000,000
Ayala Corp.	325	332.5	325	330	48,690
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5	5	4.95	5	1,932,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	4,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.24	2.24	2.24	2.24	110,000
APC Group Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	450,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	500,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.92	1.9	1.92	100,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.02	1	1.02	1,672,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	20,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	1,100,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	4.45	4.45	4.35	4.4	184,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	1,330,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	5,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	12,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.51	1,780,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	3,010,000
SM Investments Corp.	220	221	218	220	129,170
South China Resources Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	100,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	200,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.14	0.14	2,510,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	4,033,500
Belle Corp.	1.02	1.02	1	1.02	610,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.235	0.245	0.235	0.24	14,650,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.56	1.58	1.52	1.54	206,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.76	28,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	2,330,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	30,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	800,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.71	970,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	7,791,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.38	2.42	2.38	2.42	100,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	3,380,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	100,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	4,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	5,225,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	1,800,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.16	0.175	0.16	0.165	5,300,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	250,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6	6	6	6	1,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.185	0.185	0.18	0.185	3,020,000
SM Development Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.1	8	8.1	278,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	4,890,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11	11	10.75	10.75	39,700
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	32,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.88	0.89	1,170,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	750	750	745	750	31,090
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.15	1,722,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1755	1755	1745	1750	330,700
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	220,000
Ionics Inc.	1.24	1.34	1.24	1.3	205,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.26	1.28	1.26	1.28	60,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.5	1.5	1.46	1.46	3,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.03	0.027	0.029	973,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.82	1.82	1,001,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	439,400
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	2,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.68	1.76	1.68	1.76	5,310,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	119,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	890,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	580	580	580	580	160
Ipeople Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.25	3.3	92,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	7.5	7.6	7.4	7.5	311,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	44	44	44	44	4,200
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.38	1.44	1.38	1.44	21,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6	6	5.9	5.9	591,000
Benguet Corp. A	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	5,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.235	0.225	0.225	1,430,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.27	9,850,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.017	0.018	55,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.026	71,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	92,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.72	1.74	1.7	1.7	9,075,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.04	2.04	1.96	1.98	4,780,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27.5	26.5	27.5	361,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	140,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	500,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	4.05	4.05	4	4	50,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	118,700

CURRENCIES

February 12, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.834725	1.000000	51.8560
Japan	Yen	0.007025	0.008416	0.4364
United Kingdom	Pound	1.453172	1.740900	90.2761
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107548	0.128843	6.6813
Switzerland	Franc	0.642244	0.769408	39.8984
Canada	Dollar	0.728762	0.873057	45.2732
Singapore	Dollar	0.512069	0.613459	31.8115
Australia	Dollar	0.617537	0.739809	38.3635
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.214711	2.653224	137.5856
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.222593	0.266667	13.8283
Brunei	Dollar	0.510503	0.611583	31.7142
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000108	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021105	0.025284	1.3111
UAE	Dirham	0.227265	0.272264	14.1185
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.198000	62.1235
Argentina	Peso	0.272341	0.326264	16.9187
Brazil	Real	0.383693	0.459664	23.8363
Denmark	Kroner	0.133963	0.160488	8.3223
India	Rupee	0.018928	0.022676	1.1759
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.223876	0.268204	13.9080
Mexico	New Peso	0.079596	0.095356	4.9448
New Zealand	Dollar	0.565110	0.677002	35.1066
South Africa	Rand	0.136301	0.163289	8.4675
Korea	Won	0.000858	0.001028	0.0533
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025785	0.030890	1.6018

Gov't drops plan . . .

From page B1

direction for the country.

"The idea is to maintain tariffs and hold the next review in 2009 (a year before free trade takes effect in Southeast Asia)," the source said. "By then, we may be in a better position to make decisions regarding open trade."

This position was a complete turnaround from ideas being broached last year when the comprehensive review had just started.

Back then, officials were considering an across-the-board increase of one percentage point in tariffs aimed at raising government revenues when President Macapagal-Arroyo admitted that the country was in a fiscal crisis.

However, another source had said that a uniform increase in all tariffs was considered following a study that showed the country's most favored nation tariffs were the lowest in the region.

MFN tariffs apply to products imported from outside Southeast Asia. Tariffs within the region are in most cases uniform under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Free Trade Area's Comprehensive Effective Preferential Tariff scheme.

Smart, Piltel backtrack on PLDT promo

Access charges dispute spurs rethinking of ₱10-10 offer

By Clarissa S. Batino

SMART COMMUNICATIONS INC. and Pilipino Telephone Corp. have called off their P10 for 10-minute call promo to Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. pending the resolution of an access charge dispute with competitors.

Smart and Piltel's Talk 'N Text did not pursue the extension of the P10-10 promo when it expired on Feb. 5, even if it had a petition to extend the offer by another 30 days from Feb. 6.

Globe Telecom Inc. and Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc. are fiercely opposing the P10-10 promo. They claim that interconnection rates between PLDT and its wireless units are discriminatory because no commercial deal will allow Smart and Piltel to offer a P1-for every minute of call to PLDT.

Pulling out of the P10-10 promo, according to sources, is PLDT's way of softening up competition following Globe's challenge to PLDT to reduce access charges or fees, which telcos pay one another by up to 83 percent.

PLDT and Smart spokesperson Ramon Isberto, however, denied that the mobile phone operator was trying to pacify Globe when it halted its P10-10 promo.

"We are experimenting with various pricing packages and will continue offering different schemes to develop the ones that our customers find most appealing," Isberto said.

The National Telecommunications Commission is treading carefully on the issue. The commission will meet today to discuss the access rate issue, especially between PLDT and fierce rival Globe.

Napoleon Nazareno, president of PLDT, Smart and Piltel, had rejected a proposal of Globe to bring down drastically the access charges on domestic and international calls.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan said that Globe's proposal to cut domestic access charges would only reduce the telco giant's yearly revenue by no more than P700 million. This was not even one percent of PLDT's consolidated revenue of more than P150 billion last year, he said.

On cutting overseas termination rates, Pangilinan said Globe was already stepping out of bounds.

Access charges or termination rates are paid by the phone company that makes the call. Since PLDT is the biggest player, the bulk of the local traffic ends on its network. In terms of traffic coming from the United States, the Philippines gets the fourth largest volume.

80% of Semirara coastal area cleared of oil spill

By Abigail L. Ho

SEMIRARA ISLAND, ANtique—More than 80 percent of Semirara Island's shoreline and 30 percent of its mangrove areas have already been cleared of oil that was spilled from a National Power Corp. barge in December 2005.

Napocor president Cyril Del Callar said that there is no longer any danger arising from the oil spill which has affected even the tourist paradise of Boracay, located some 60 kilometers from Semirara.

He said not only was the clean-up crew working double time to clean up the mess, but the spilled oil had also been contained within Cayvilo cove in Semirara.

"Nature actually helped us (in containing the oil spill)," Del Callar said. "It's an act of God."

Del Callar said that the divine intervention was also enhanced by the hard work of Napocor employees, as well as those from the Philippine Coast Guard and Department of Environment and Natural Resources, aside from Semirara residents who had been putting hours to clean the affected areas.

Last December, the fuel tanks of Napocor Power Barge 106 were damaged after the vessel ran aground due to bad weather conditions. The ensuing oil spill affected some 600 meters of Semirara's rocky and sandy shoreline, as well as more than 100 hectares of mangrove areas.

Del Callar said around 210,000 liters of oil found its way in the waters surrounding the island.

Concerns were then expressed that the island of Boracay would be adversely affected by the oil spill.

Three weeks after the incident, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla announced that Boracay was in no danger from the oil spill.

At present, 250 Semirara residents and scores of volunteers from other areas, are continuing the cleanup of the mangrove areas.

Del Callar said that the cleanup alone would cost Napocor P90 million. Estimates were not available on how much it would cost to rehabilitate the affected areas.

LandBank seeks to raise $150M from debt offer

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED LAND BANK of the Philippines, the country's fourth biggest bank, will raise as much as $150 million through a tier 2 subordinated debt offering this first quarter.

In a recent press briefing, Landbank officer-in-charge Gilda Pico said that the bank hopes to generate at least $100 million. But if the investors' appetite were good, the bank could jack up the offering size to $150 million.

If Landbank succeeded in raising $150 million from the tier 2 offering, Pico said the bank would no longer have to get additional equity in the form of preferred shares.

Pico explained that the bank had very limited options, as far as preferred shares issuance was concerned, because under its charter, only government or its agencies could buy those securities.

"It's expensive especially if we come to other government agencies because they are looking for higher dividend rate," Pico said. "Dividends are deducted not from operating expenses but from retained earnings, so preferred shares are expensive."

The bank did not find it too difficult to hurdle the mandated shift to the new international accounting standards, but would like to prepare for the more stringent provisioning requirements under Basle 2.

With its fund-raising initiatives, Landbank aims to hike its capital adequacy ratio to 17 percent from the current 12.8 percent. It has mandated Deutsche Bank to manage its debt issuance.

The bank chalked up P3.02 billion in net profits for 2005—34 percent better than a year ago on higher interest earnings and prudent expenditure control.

"Three billion is a historic high for Landbank, which also surpassed the 2004 net income of P2.25 billion by a hefty 34 percent, thus making 2005 a banner year," Pico said.

Likewise, the bank's assets grew by 6.6 percent to P310.9 billion in 2005 from P291 billion in 2004.

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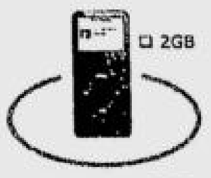

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Filipinos seeking love online

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

MORE THAN 100,000 FILIPINOS REGISTERED with a Philippine-based online dating service are now actively searching for love on the Internet, a trend that is increasingly becoming more evident as Filipinos are now more connected via the Internet and mobile phones. Not only that. Through social networking services they can even send Valentine's Day flowers online.

"There have been more Filipinos seeking love online. Unlike the social networking service by Friendster, our goal is to allow people to find love through our service," said Mary Ann Go, marketing head of Philippine-based matchmaking website itzamatch.com, said.

Additional investments amounting to $450,000 are being poured into Itzamatch.com this year, as the company hopes to increase its presence in the Philippines through offline parties and speed matching activities this year. The company aims to hit 250,000 members by February 2007—a realistic target, Go explained, noting that the company is not yet charging people for use of its service.

For Valentine's Day, itzamatch.com is encouraging users to submit their love stories to the company, which in turn, will be published in a local newspaper. It is also offering a romantic dinner for three couples at a local hotel on February 14.

"There's a recent study done by a local advertising agency that shows the top online activities of Filipinos. One of them was online dating," Go said.

Friendster Philippines, through Philippine partner Pusit.com, has also recently disclosed plans to start selling "Friendster Flowers" to Filipino users, according to Terence Pua, founder of Pusit.com.

Hoping to ride on the Valentine's Day fever, Pua said that Friendster Philippines will allow Filipino users to buy real flowers via the social networking service, and have them delivered to anyone in the country for free. For P299, Filipinos can now send a one-stem rose to anyone in the country courtesy of Friendster, Pua added.

Itzamatch.com and Friendster are currently two popular online services that allow Filipinos to find love or relationships online. To date, there are five million Filipinos on Friendster. Itzamacth has about 140,000 members and is now building a community for Filipino singles. It was formerly known as match.ph until it was acquired by Bigfoot Global Solutions in 2003.

Itzamatch.com will soon launch an online "keyword search" which will let people find common keywords, such as "diving" and "biking" so that love-seekers can find someone online with common attributes.

Users asked to boycott Valentine's Day spammers

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

WITH VALENTINE'S DAY AROUND THE corner, Internet security vendor Sophos is urging consumers to boycott companies taking advantage of the event to sell goods via spam.

In its recent web poll, Sophos found that about 9 percent of computer users have purchased goods sold via spam. It also noted that thousands of unsolicited bulk e-mail being sent with the intention of selling Valentine-related products are often seen days before February 14.

E-mail with subject lines like "Give the scent of love this year!" or "Whiter Teeth before Valentines," or "Don't Wait—15% Off All Valentine Fresh Flowers" have been seen roaming the Internet.

Other goods promoted via Valentine-related spam range from skimpy lingerie to chocolates, flowers to pashmina shawls and even adult board games.

Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant for Sophos, said that spammers are now peddling more goods claimed to make people more attractive to the opposite sex.

"As our web poll has proved, the sad truth is that there are people out there who buy products sold via spam and admit they visit websites promoted via bulk email," he said.

He said buying goods marketed via spam would encourage spammers to send more junk e-mail.

"If no-one purchased the products, then the spammers would disappear. It's time to boycott the companies who use spam to sell their goods. If you receive an unsolicited commercial e-mail, don't try, don't buy, don't reply," he said.

Level Up! hopes to score slam dunk with Freestyle

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

GIVEN THE FILIPINO PASSION for basketball, Philippine game publisher Level Up! said this week that it is confident it can entice the country's population of basketball fans to play a new South Korean-made hiphop online basketball game called Freestyle.

"With something as common as basketball, we hope this game would become big, reaching out to non-gamers," said Ben Colayco, Level Up! game boss. "This is our first huge entry into casual games."

Inspired by street basketball, Freestyle is Level Up!'s answer to the growing number of casual games entering the Philippines. Recently, rival game publisher NetGames launched an online golf game called PangYa.

Since Freestyle is currently the biggest sport-related online game in South Korea, it was no surprise that the beta version of the game has already attracted over one million registered Filipino gamers since the game's open beta launch in January 2006, according to Mike Constantino, Level-Up! business unit director for casual games. Freestyle now has 12,000 concurrent users, according to Colayco and Constantino.

The game is scheduled to become commercially available on February 27, meaning players will now be able to purchase items and outfits sold through the game.

Freestyle is a free online game allowing anyone to play without the need to pay monthly fees. According to Jake San Diego, Level Up! marketing communications manager and public relations head, Freestyle has different channels which are open for free to players whose characters are from Level 1 to 15. Once they reach Level 16, however, players will have to buy virtual items to continue playing Freestyle.

Level Up!'s popular online game Ragnarok took three years to hit three to four million registered users, according to Colayco. Since Freestyle took only less than two months to generate one million registered users, the executive predicts Freestyle will become a hit in the country, where basketball courts are ubiquitous.

LEVEL/B-110

Security strategies

By Jerry Liao

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4. Create disaster recovery plans.
5. Make Contingency Plans.

The Powertips Security Secrets and Strategies conference is scheduled on March 16, 2006 at Dusit Hotel Nikko. Tickets are available at all SM TicketNet outlets or call 911-5555. Register online at www.infochat.com.ph.

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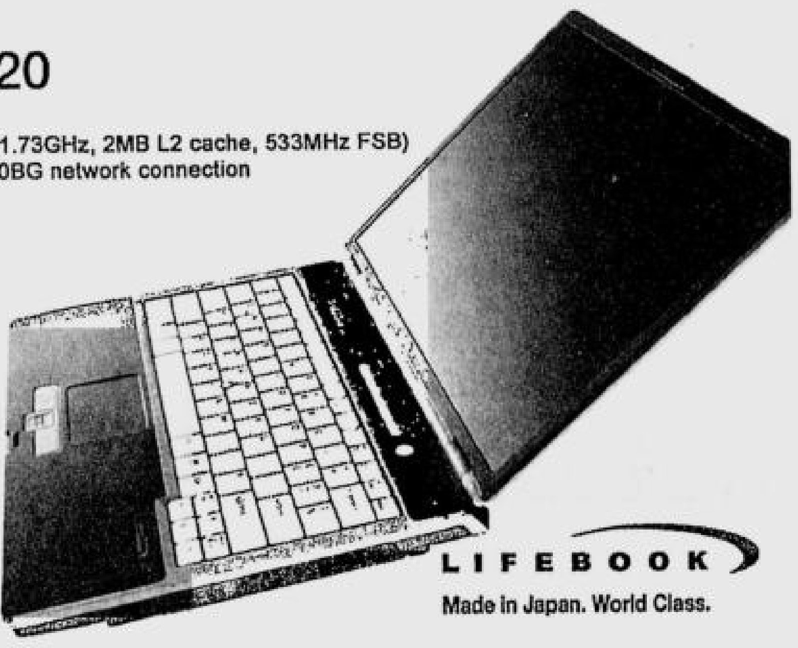

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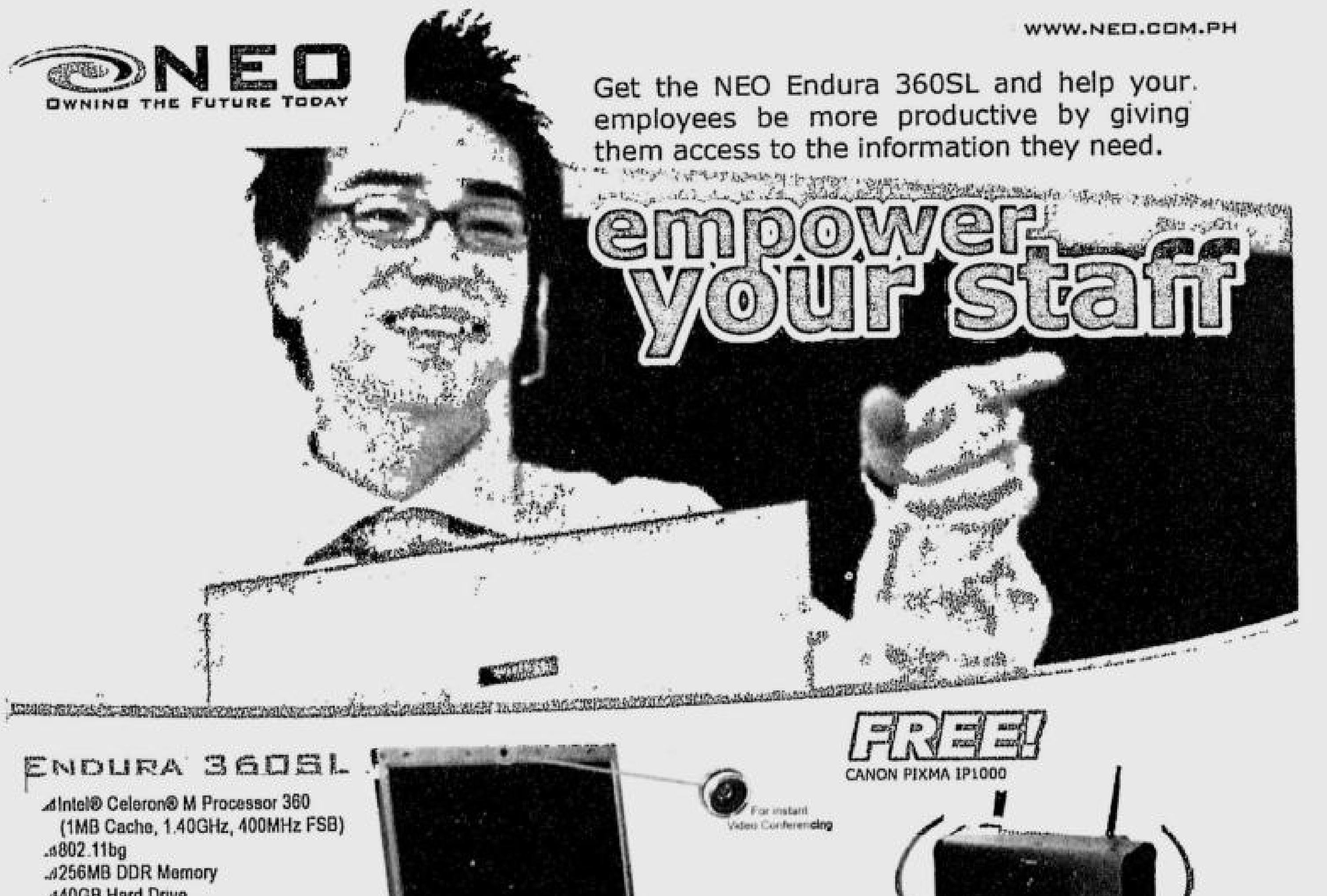

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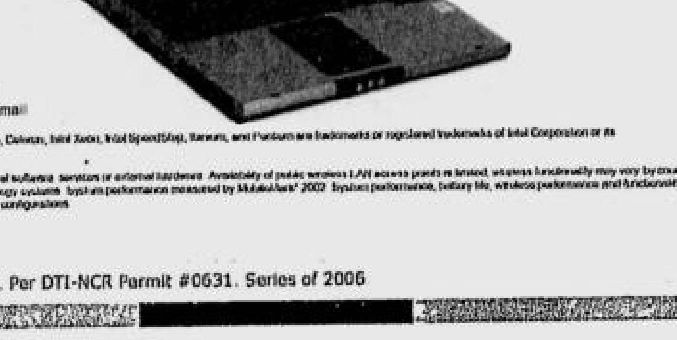

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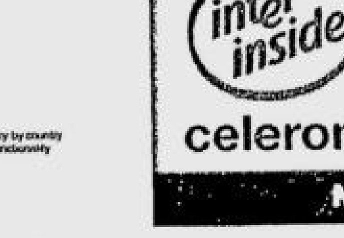

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Business as usual in Asia Pacific, says Blackberry maker

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

DESPITE BEING BELEAGUERED BY A patent infringement case in the US, Research in Motion (RIM), maker of the widely popular Blackberry handheld device, assured the public that its worldwide business is not affected.

In fact, the company's Asia Pacific business is expected to grow this year with a flurry of new models and mobile business applications to be introduced in the coming months.

"It does not affect us at all," says RIM Asia Pacific Vice President Norm Lo, referring to the ongoing court case filed by patent holder NTP in the US.

The five-year battle between NTP and RIM has caused fears among US users that their Blackberries would one day stop working. A defeat by RIM in the US, its biggest market, could send the company's worldwide business on a nosedive.

In an exclusive interview with Infotech, Lo described the case as having "no bearing" on the company's business and claimed that RIM has absolute control over the issue.

He added that news reports about the case "tend to be sensationalized," and that the threat of a closure of its operations in the US will not happen.

"We can dictate what will happen and despite this our business strategy is still in line," Lo said.

Lo was in the Philippines recently to meet with RIM's carrier partners, Smart Communications and Globe Telecom.

"We're seriously doing everything to strengthen our business, in the legal front, patent front, business front and in the 'workaround,'" Lo said, referring to a software workaround being developed by RIM as a response to the patent infringement case.

The US remains the biggest market for RIM, accounting for about 75 percent of the company's overall business. The remaining 25 percent is shared by Europe, Asia Pacific and Canada.

As of November 2005, RIM has 4.3 million subscribers worldwide, a number expected to grow to 5 million by the end of 2006.

Lo said Asia is one of their fastest growing segments in the world. RIM has 21 partner mobile communications carriers in 11 Asian countries.

He expects to get 10 more Asian carriers by the end of 2006.

Even as mobile phone manufacturers have started to encroach into RIM's high-level market segment by introducing products with the same "push technology" used by Blackberry, Lo said the company is confident that it will remain at the top of industry.

Hollywood download service made in RP

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

FILIPINO-OWNED SYSTEM INTEGRATION firm MDI is set to launch its first international subsidiary, a content provider catering to multi-media downloads from Hollywood celebrities.

MDI's "Blogstar" (www.blogstar.com) will feature multimedia content uploaded by Hollywood celebrities, which include SMS, picture messages, video and audio clips that can be viewed from the site and downloaded to a multimedia phone.

Among the US celebrities already part of Blogstar are Wesley Snipes, Alicia Silverstone, David Arquette, and supermodel Caprice Bourret.

MDI has partnered with the GSM Association chairman Craig Ehrlich and US movie producer Ted Field to get Hollywood celebrities to join Blogstar.

Ehrlich will provide technical assistance for mobile download infrastructure for Blogstar and Field will enlist Hollywood celebrities to provide the site with content.

Field has produced films like "Chronicles of Riddick," "The Last Samurai," and recently, "Zathura."

MDI managing director Myla Villanueva said they would be launching Blogstar during the 3GSM World in Barcelona next week.

Villanueva adds that they have tied up with about 20 mobile phone carriers to distribute content from Blogstar, among them Cingular, T-Mobile and Sprint in the US; Telefonica, and Vodafone in Spain; Virgin Mobile, T-Mobile, Orange, O2, and Hutchison in the UK.

Depending on the needs of the carrier, Blogstar will be localized, Villanueva said. There could be plans to include local artists in each country to be featured in Blogstar.

Level Up!. . .

From page B10

Hoping this won't become just another "fad" game, Level Up! is working on getting the support of local basketball leagues, such as the Philippine Basketball Association, according to Colayco. The local publisher is also looking at establishing virtual basketball leagues, where teams can compete in virtual tournaments.

Meanwhile, Constantino said "it is a natural progression" for local game publishers to release more casual games this year since the Philippine market is already saturated with massively multiplayer online games, which have a different business model.

Colayco disclosed that Freestyle Philippines is the first English version of the game. Developed by JoyCity of South Korea, the game developers hope to make the country the test site for the English version before it introduces the game to the US market.

Level Up! also indicated that it is mulling plans to allow in-game advertising for Freestyle Philippines.

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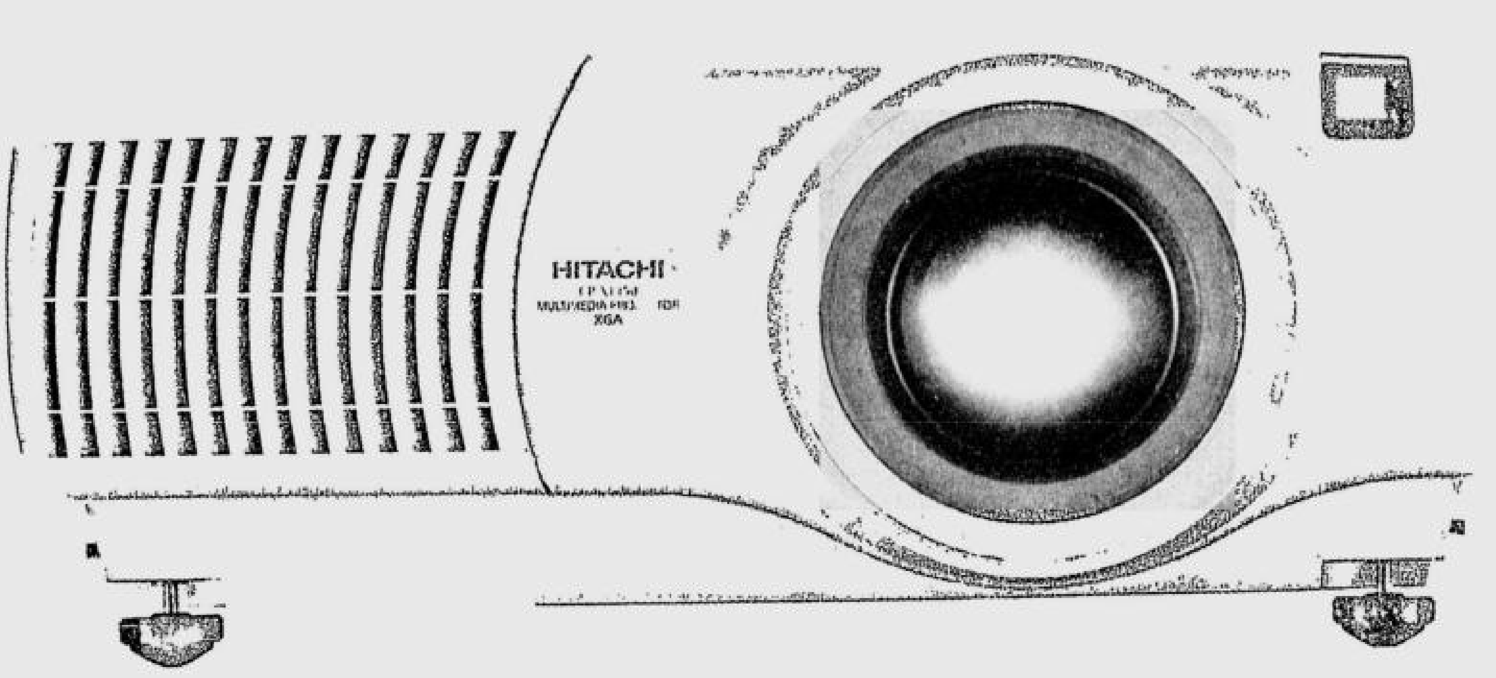

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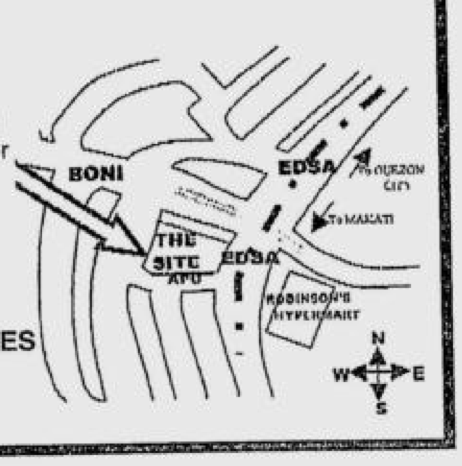

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NDC
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INVITATION TO BID

The NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (NDC) invites interested bidders for the sale of its property with a total land area of 6,277 square meters located along Gaffud St., Barangay Soyung, Echague, Isabela on an "as is, where is" basis. The minimum bid is set at P1,269,400.00 inclusive of Value Added Tax (VAT).

Interested parties may register and secure Bidding Guidelines upon payment of P500.00 which is non-refundable beginning February 20, 2006 at:

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
C/o The Secretariat
Disposal Committee
7th Floor, National Development Company Bldg.
116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
Direct Line: (02) 840-13-36; (02) 840-11-47;
Trunk Line: (02) 840-48-38 Locals 212, 267 & 269

A pre-bid conference shall be held on March 6, 2006; 9:30 AM at the Alberto Barretto Hall, National Development Company Building

Bids must be sealed and submitted between 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM of March 10, 2006 labeled and addressed as follows:

The CHAIRMAN
Disposal Committee
National Development Company
7th Floor, NDC Building
116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
CODE: Soyung, Echague Property

The opening of sealed bids prepared in the prescribed forms and accompanied by a 10% bid bond is scheduled on March 10 at 2:01 PM at the Alberto Baretto Hall, NDC Building in the presence of all bidder(s) and /or their authorized representatives. Bids received after 2:00 PM shall no longer be accepted.

The NDC Disposal Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bids or to waive any of the formalities required, or accept only such bids which are deemed advantageous to NDC.

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Roberto N. Lumba, Mabia L. Halliday
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*Widow of National Scientist, **DR. GEMINIANO DE OCAMPO***
Joined her Creator in His grace on February 11, 2006 at the age of 89.

Her bereaved family; brother **Camilo**; sister **Emma**; children **Ruben** & **Brenda Serapio**, **Cynthia** & **Sonny Primero**, **Tita** & **Melchor Elegado** and **VG** & **Ninay Rustia**; grandchildren **Michelle**, **RJ** & **Gigi**, **Denise De Ocampo**, **Pebbles** & **Jay**, **Domini** & **Joanne**, **Judge Primero**, **Annaly** & **Alvin**, **Dol** & **Jon**, **Meechee** & **Meechoy Elegado**, **Jopol**, **Victor**, **Sunny** & **Asuncion de Ocampo**; great-grandchildren and other relatives & friends request your prayers for the repose of her soul.

Her ashes will be at Don Bosco Chapel, Makati until February 14, 2006

SB Corp. raises loan caps for SMEs

DUTCH international development bank Netherlands Development Finance Co. (FMO) managing director Arthur Arnold (left) recently paid a courtesy call on Ambassador Jesus P. Tambunting (center), chair and CEO of Planters Development Bank. Arnold and Wim Wienk, head of FMO's Asia department, reaffirmed FMO's commitment to Plantersbank and its mission to promote SMEs. FMO has been a shareholder of Plantersbank since 1983.

By Christine A. Gaylican

TO REACH MORE SMALL AND MEDIUM ENterprises this year, the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp. (SB Corp.) has relaxed its lending rules and increased its lending ceilings.

For SMEs in the provinces, qualified borrowers with an asset size of P15-P100 million can now borrow up to P10 million, up from the previous cap of P5 million, under the SME-Financing for Variable Business Expansion. The loan can be used for business expansion, inclusive of the working capital.

The borrowing cap for enterprises with asset base of at least P3 million was now set at P3 million while micro enterprises with asset size of at least P500,000 may borrow as much as P1.5 million.

SB Corp.'s lending facility for franchising companies and related businesses has been enhanced. It now covers purchase orders from suppliers, franchise company-owned outlets for possible resale, expansion of franchise commissary outlets and systems development for new franchisers.

Moreover, financing for suppliers had been expanded to cover the top 2,000 corporations.

SB Corp. chair Zorayda Amelia Capistrano-Alonzo said the expansion of the borrowing ceilings would allow the company to reach more SME borrowers from all industry sectors.

The move, she said, was in response the growing and evolving credit needs of the SMEs.

SB Corp. has a loan portfolio of about P6 billion, part of which was raised through official development assistance (ODA) from the Asian Development Bank and the Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau (KfW), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

SB Corp., an agency of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), makes specific financial interventions such as retail lending for pre-bankable, guarantees for near bankable and wholesale facility for bankable SMEs.

Considered as the backbone of the Philippine economy, the SME sector employs 69.9 percent of the country's labor force.

RP, Bahrain to hold air talks

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINES IS SET TO HOLD AIR TALKS with Bahrain late this week.

A member of the country's negotiating panel said Bahrain was expected to seek additional flight entitlements after Gulf Air lost to Abu Dhabi's Etihad four-weekly flights to Manila.

Etihad is scheduled to start its Abu Dhabi-Manila flights today. Abu Dhabi, one of the seven Arab emirates, took back last year the four-weekly flights that it had lent to Gulf Air for several years.

Now Bahrain is pressing for additional entitlements from the Philippines to replace what Gulf Air had lost to Etihad, according to aviation officials. It currently has four Manila-Bahrain flights.

Gulf Air, Middle East's oldest carrier, used to fly nine times to Manila from Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Oman.

Aviation officials said the air policy talks—the Philippines' first for the year—would be held in Clark, Pampanga on Thursday and Friday (Feb. 16 and 17).

The Philippines, according to the official, does not stand to benefit from the expansion of air ties with Bahrain because it already had liberalized its air policies.

"Prioritizing air talks with Bahrain instead of Saudi Arabia might be inimical to the interest of Philippine Airlines," he said.

PAL has been losing on the Middle East route after the Philippines gave excessive capacity to Gulf carriers.

PAL president Jaime Bautista had asked Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza and the air panel to defer any air talks with Bahrain and other Gulf states for at least two months.

"Any aviation discussions with Arab Gulf States that further increase the capacity oversupply (with the Middle East) would only compromise an increasingly critical situation," said Bautista in a letter to Mendoza.

The PAL president said should this happen, the flag carrier would have to push through with the suspension of its Manila-Riyadh thrice-weekly flights starting March 2.

₱1.1-B theme park project in Manila OKd

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A CHINESE FIRM'S PROPOSED P1.1-BILlion theme park was given the green light by the Board of Investments last week.

According to the BOI, China Oceanis Philippines Inc.'s Manila Ocean Park would rise at the 1.2-hectare Luneta Boardwalk Platform facing Manila Bay and behind the Quirino Grandstand.

The amusement center—set to open on Feb. 2008—would include an Oceanarium, a Marine Discovery Park, promenade areas, a boardwalk and a theme and landscaped shopping area.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez, who is also BOI managing head, said the project would not only bring in a sizeable amount of capital but was also expected to create 1,830 new jobs.

Having been listed with a pioneer status as a tourism project, the Singaporean, Malaysian, Chinese and Australian proponents would enjoy a six-year tax holiday, duty-free importation of capital equipment and other fiscal and non-fiscal perks.

Manila Ocean Park aims at becoming a major tourist destination in the country as well as in Southeast Asia mainly through its Oceanarium complex that would feature marine life-themed cultural, lifestyle and entertainment pavilion, and park facilities.

The Oceanarium would showcase "thousands of sharks, colorful tropical fishes of various species and invertebrates indigenous to the Philippines."

The BOI said the state-of-the-art facility would have a transparent, acrylic-made tunnel to provide visitors the experience of walking underwater and viewing the sea creatures.

Themes would also include the "Jungle Trek," "Seven Seas" and the "Lost Atlantis."

Moreover, the project is expected to make the site a "grand people's park" for both foreign and local tourists, in support of the Philippine Tourism Authority's and the city government of Manila's efforts to revitalize the area.

HGC raises ₱1.83B through sale of assets

THE HOME GUARANTY CORP. (HGC) said it was able to raise P1.83 billion from the sale of assets assigned to it and those acquired.

HGC president Gonzalo Benjamin Bongolan said the asset disposition proceeds "will further strengthen the government's ability to encourage growth in the private sector's participation in the housing program."

Bongolan said the P1.83 billion came from the sale of 1,584 housing units for the period 2004-2005. The number of assets sold during the period was more than 100 percent higher than the 718 housing units sold in 2002-2003. The increase can be attributed to HGC's move to adopt a liberalized disposition scheme, Bongolan added.

It was also supported by the adoption of more transparent and efficient disposition strategies as directed by Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) chair and Vice President Noli de Castro, Bongolan added.

The strategy included an intensified marketing program, the engagement of collection agents, the accreditation of more brokers, the regularization of long-time occupants and the rationalization of interest rates on in-house financed accounts.

Security Bank posts 52% income increase

SECURITY BANK CORP. LAST year posted a 52-percent increase in its after-tax net earnings to P1.15 billion from P757 million a year ago.

This was the second year in a row that Security bank realized more than 50 percent increase in its bottomline.

Earnings per share improved to P3.50 from P2.30 in 2004. Return on equity (ROE) advanced to 12.7 percent from 7.5 percent in the previous year.

The bank's pre-provision return on equity in 2005 was 27.7 percent, while cost to income ratio stood at 50 percent.

Asset quality indicators continued to underscore the bank's prudent approach to growth as its non-performing loans (NPL) ratio stood at 6.1 percent, among the best in the industry, with an NPL cover of 124 percent.

The bank ended the year with an asset size of P106 billion, or a 20 percent growth from the year-end 2004 level.

"We are extremely pleased with the earnings momentum that we have maintained over the last few years. A great deal of focus has been placed on securing a solid niche among our corporate and retail customers which should enable us to continue building a sustainable business model that will further enhance value for our stakeholders," Security Bank president and CEO Alberto S. Villarosa said.

Bancommerce profit up

BANK OF COMMERCE DELIVered yet another strong performance in 2005 as it registered an unaudited net income after tax of P435.6 million, up 423 percent from P83.3 million in the previous year.

Its growth was driven by the rise in funds and fee-based income. Total deposits reached P42.2 billion in end-December 2005. Net interest margins were posted at P1.9 billion, 9.3 percent higher than year ago. Fee-based revenues rose by P109 million to P965 million, a 13-percent increase.

Last year, the market snapped up the bank's issuance of the P1.2 billion worth of Tier-2 capital notes within a week from the start of the offer period, and raising its capital adequacy ratio well above statutory requirements. This additional capital helped boost Bancommerce's profitability and assured medium-term growth.

For 2006, Bancommerce president Raul B. de Mesa said that the bank shall focus on increasing its market share in deposits through more innovative products and a funds generation campaign. Part of this will be used to fund an expansion of its loan portfolio. Beyond growth, however, management would put a premium on further enhancing the bank's balance sheet."

Questions of policies

From page B7

CTPL policies from GSIS, and only from GSIS. Such a decree would be illegal. The industry will surely challenge it in Court.

Without going into the legal and constitutional issues, I would not mind if the GSIS were to compete in the open market for the CTPL business, just like any insurance company.

What I like most about the Clearing House is this: The vehicle owner has complete freedom to choose the insurance company, his broker or agent. I am willing to accept that the GSIS be included in the basket of choices. It will be interesting to see how much business GSIS will get in a free and open market.

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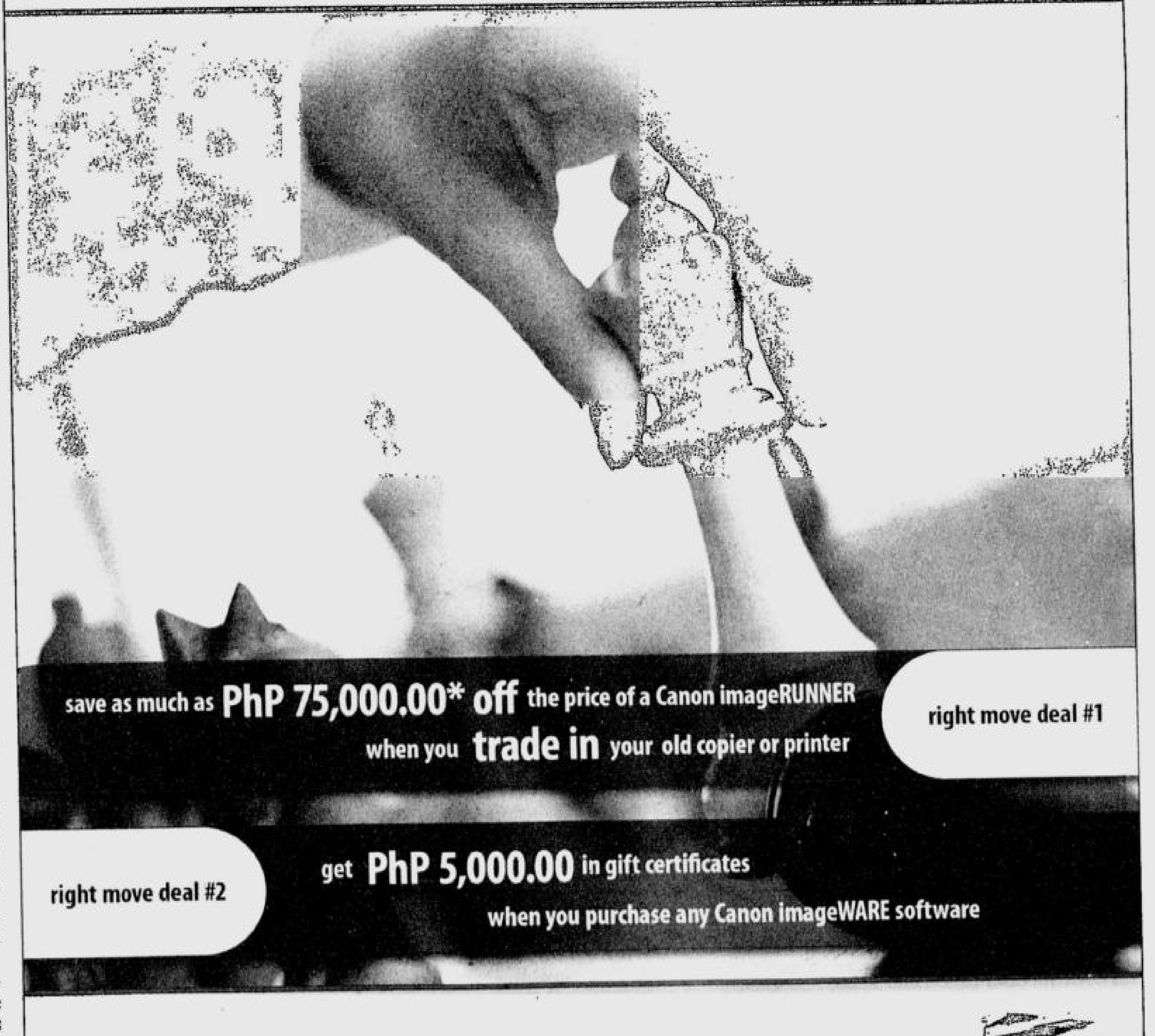
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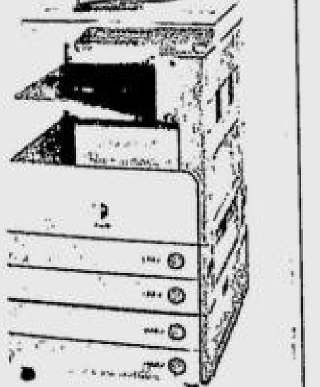

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BUSINESS

Manila Water spared from paying '06 taxes

Exemption seen to result in ₱1B in savings

By Christine A. Gaylican

EAST ZONE CONCESSIONAIRE MANILA WATER COMpany Inc. (MWCI) has been exempted from paying income taxes for another year, which may result in over P1 billion in savings for the company.

MWCI reported to the Philippine Stock Exchange that the Board of Investments had granted its petition for tax exemption throughout 2006.

Gloria Padua-de Castro, MWCI investment relations and compliance officer, said the savings to be generated from the tax exemption would enable the company to expand water service coverage in Rizal, and install 120 kilometers of pipes in other areas.

And because of the income tax holiday granted to MWCI, the company decided not to pass on to its customers any additional charges resulting from the recent increase in the value added tax rate.

The water firm increased its rates on Jan. 1.

Virgilio C. Rivera, MWCI regulatory affairs director, said in an interview that its 56-centavo rate increase excluded the additional 2 percent increase in the VAT rate.

Rivera said that what is significant is the drop of the foreign currency differential adjustment (FCDA) from 46 centavos to 37 centavos per cubic meter due to the recent gains of the peso against the US dollar.

"We also want to emphasize that the additional expanded value added tax of 2 percent is yet to be factored in our rates," Rivera said.

Under its concession agreement with the government, the inflation adjustment provides for an automatic increase in water charges each year, while the forex component of bills is adjusted on a quarterly basis.

Manila Water supplies water and sewerage services to the east zone of Metro Manila which include parts of Manila, Quezon City, Makati, Mandalaluyong, Quezon City, Marikina, Pasig, Taguig, Pateros, and a portion of Rizal province.

Can't afford LPG? Why not try coal?

By Abigail L. Ho

BORACAY, AKLAN—IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD even the "sachet-type" of cooking gas, why not try going back to basics and use coal for cooking instead?

Although the Department of Energy is urging oil firms to start offering liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in 1-kilogram tanks, the agency is also working with the departments of trade and science and technology to commercially offer coal briquettes for cooking.

Coal briquettes are blocks of coal dust mixed with other biomass materials that can be used for cooking and kindling. Unlike conventional charcoal, which is popularly used for barbecues, coal briquettes are more environment friendly.

"There's actually an experimental coal briquette project right now," Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said. "We want to encourage this as an environment friendly substitute for LPG."

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo herself had given specific instructions to explore this cooking gas alternative, in keeping with the government's thrust to ease the burden of consumers, particularly those in the marginalized sector.

The Consunji family's DMCI Holdings Inc. is currently working with the DOE and a German technology partner for the production of coal briquettes for the commercial market.

DMCI president Isidro Consunji said this was one of the company's new projects. DMCI draws its coal resources from the Semirara Mining Corp., the country's largest coal mining firm.

Lotilla said DMCI's German consultant would be coming back to the country within the month. More concrete plans could be presented by then.

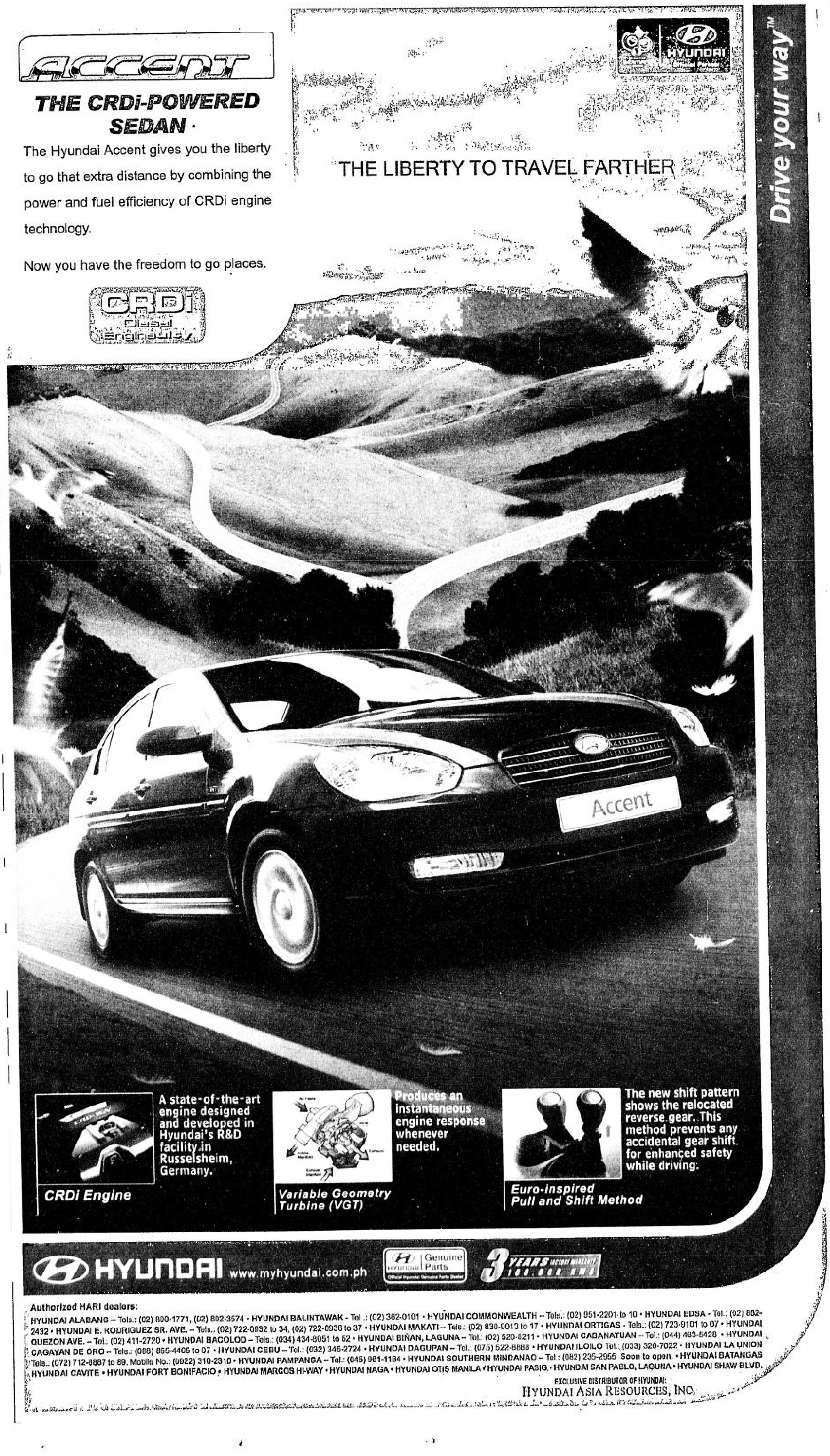
State firm Philippine National Oil Co., through subsidiary PNOC Coal Corp., used to operate a coal briquetting plant in Bauan, Batangas, marketing the coal briquettes under the Grilla brand.

PNOC Coal has stopped operating the plant and has leased it out to a private entity, which now supplies coal briquettes to nearby hatcheries, Lotilla said.

"The private entity leasing PNOC's former briquetting plant is actually making money," he said.

The rising prices of LPG in the international market had prompted the DOE to come up with ways to make cooking gas more affordable to the masses. One such way is for LPG to be sold in smaller quantities.

DOE director Zenaida Monsada had earlier said that two firms, DJ Safe Gas and Powertech Asia Pacific Inc., had expressed their intention to offer 1-kilogram LPG tanks, which would be priced at a little more than P60, and would last for about three days.



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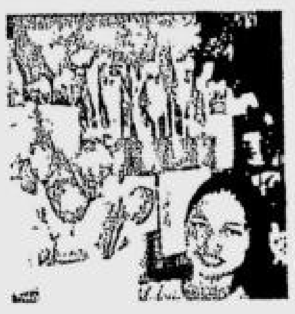

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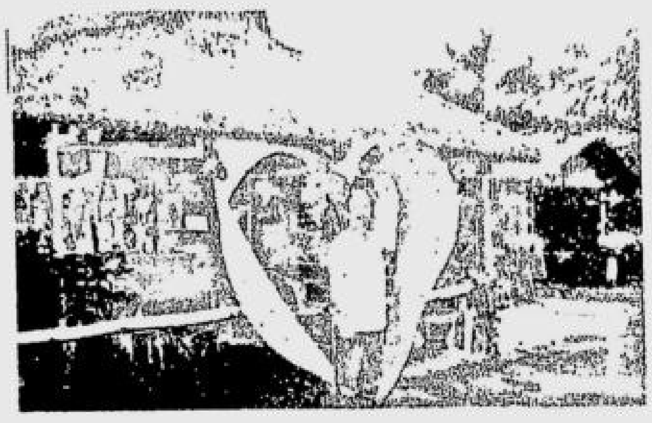

Love is in the air, and prices are soaring

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

TRAFFIC IS WORSE than usual and flowers, chocolates and gifts are suddenly more expensive.

But these do not deter the undying romantics among Filipinos from going out en masse to celebrate Valentine's Day.

This augurs well for hotels, bars and concert halls that count the Valentine's season as among the busiest on their calendar.

Randal Linhart, food and beverage manager of the Makati Shangri-La, tells Business Monday that the Philippines is the only country he has been to where Valentine's Day is cel-

LOVE/ B2-3

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"The Nestlé brands have become woven into the fabric of the Filipino way of life," said Polly Nazareno, PLDT/SMART president and CEO during their formal contract signing. "As part of the PLDT group of companies, SMART is happy to be of service to a known industry leader."

"Our two-year exclusive arrangement with SMART will allow us to standardize our mobile corporate plans and enjoy the benefits of a custom package," said Nandu Nandkishore, Chairman and CEO of Nestlé Philippines Inc. The deal got even sweeter for Nestlé employees in the form of discounted personal SMART plans. "The benefits to be derived by the company under the corporate package will also be extended to interested Nestlé employees who want to join the SMART network."

Nestlé is the world's biggest food and beverage company employing approximately 247,000 people worldwide. It was founded in 1866 by Henri Nestlé, who formulated the first cereal-based baby food for children.

In the Philippines, Nestlé has been operating for over 100 years, and is one of the top 10 corporations in the country. Nestle Philippines Inc. ranks among the top in the product categories where it competes. It operates 4 factories around the Philippines that export to the entire ASEAN region Nestlé's brands include NESCAFE, MAGGI, NIDO, MILO, and NESTEA.

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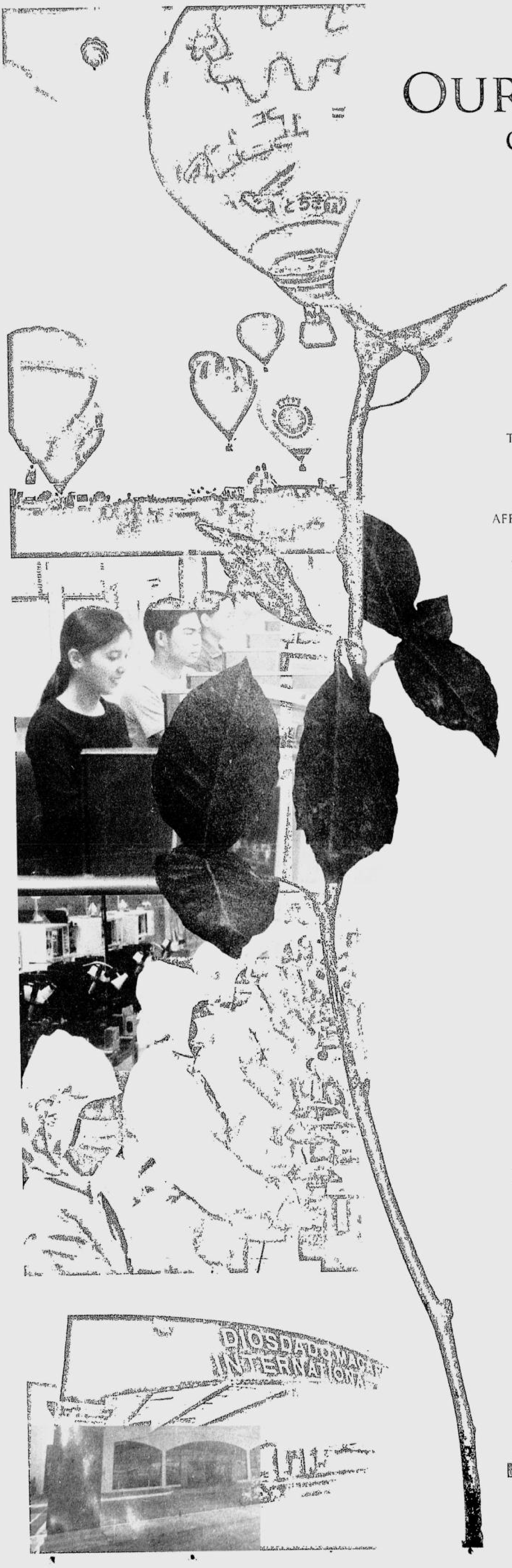

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Love is in the air . . .

From page B1

ebrated over three-days, from February 13 to 15.

In other places like Hong Kong, he says, not too much attention is given to the day, and those who do are usually couples out on a date. Not so in the Philippines.

"Here, Valentine's Day is not exclusive for two people anymore," Linhart, a Canadian, says. "There are families, two or three couples together, one couple setting up friends on a blind date, even bosses taking out their secretaries as a treat."

He says the day's attraction can be attributed to the emotional nature of Filipinos.

"Filipinos are the warmest and most compassionate people in Asia," he says, "they are very emotional and romantic and this adds a deeper dimension to the season."

Thus, almost all of the restaurants of hotels like the Makati Shangri-la are full during this much-anticipated time of the year.

For the 14th, Makati Shangri-La is bringing back its "Love Is In The Air" special where guests enjoy a unique set menu under the stars in the outdoor patio for about P2,000 a person.

Ladies get a complimentary rose and the couples, families or friends enjoy good food with quiet music in the background.

"Every year, seats are sold out, we just try to keep extra tables around for last-minute guests," Linhart says, "we expect another record year this year."

Bars like Merk's Bar Bistro in Greenbelt 3 have the same experience during the Valentine season.

"Valentine's is the best day for a bar," says Merk's owner Richard Merk. "It's even better than Christmas for us."

Rising prices and the weakening purchasing power are not too much of a deterrent, he says, as it has become a tradition among Filipinos to go out during Valentine's Day.

"People really go out, that's why every place is full," Merk says, "and it's not just couples who go out, there are families, people in courtship, married couples and even those who are just friends."

This year, Aretha and Sould Out band and Noel Cabangon will perform back to back for the "Betcha By Golly Love" special for Feb. 13 and 14.

There will be a minimum P800 per person consumable charge, which Merk says is better than selling tickets.

Merk expects another full house this year, as has been the experience the past two years, political and economic problems notwithstanding.

"Filipinos are romantic, that's why they will still go out," Merk says, "they believe in Cupid, the same way they believe in Santa Claus."

Entertainment, however, is not the only thing that lovers and families look forward to during Valentine's.

Food and company will do nicely, which is why restaurants also experience brisk business during the February red letter days.

Ricky Gutierrez, CEO and president of the Chateau group of restaurants, which includes Sentro, Chateau 1771 and Portico, says Feb. 14 is the single best day in the year for the group, with sales doubling that day.

Gutierrez adds that the demand for reservations goes as high as 70 percent of the tables, as opposed to the normal rate of 30 percent.

"And on Valentine's Day, we try to bring people in as early as 6:30 p.m. and then we inform them that there will be another group coming in at about 8:30 pm," Gutierrez says.

BIG BUCKS NEEDED

Putting on shows is not for the faint-hearted

DANEE Samonte (standing, second from right) with the Cascades and Area One.

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

PUTTING ON A GREAT VALENtine's show is not for the faint of heart.

Danee Samonte, who heads Steve O'Neal Productions, a local firm that brings in foreign talents, tells Business Monday that while there is a big market for Valentine's Day shows, a concert promoter has to deal with fierce competition, making it hard to get a profitable enough slice of the show market.

This year's Valentine season, which starts from Feb. 10 to 14, will see at least 30 major shows highlighted by Steve O'Neal's The Zombies, crooner Andy Williams and 70s pop group Kalapana.

"The only difference this year is that there are more local acts putting on shows," Samonte says, "which was not the case last year or two years ago when there were more foreign acts coming to the country for Valentine's Day."

One reason is the cost.

Samonte says the venue is one of the biggest expenses that a promoter has to deal with.

Rent for one night at the Araneta Coliseum, for example, will set a promoter back P300,000, and another P100,000 for the air conditioning. This does not include the center's commission from the ticket sales.

Araneta Coliseum, however, is the preferred venue despite the price because it has the biggest capacity of about 15,000 people, and also because of its prime location.

This explains the Araneta Coliseum's long waiting list.

Samonte says The Zombies concert tonight, for instance, was booked as early as May last year.

After getting the venue, there's the talent fee for the artist, which can range from $10,000 per show for inactive artists to the $500,000-level for big-name artists like Elton John, Billy Joel or Mariah Carey.

Local artists get paid much lower. Sources says the range is P20,000 to P500,000 a show.

The talent fees of the foreign artists do not include hidden costs contained in the so-called "technical rider" that spells out the requirements of the artist before putting on the show.

"The more popular the talent, the thicker the technical rider," Samonte says.

The rider includes everything from what the artist wants to eat, the plane they will take, the sound system they will use, the hotel they will stay in, even the size of the bottled water they want to take along while they're in the Philippines.

Samonte says a concert promoter must be ready to adhere to the weirdest request from the artists.

There was one major artist, he says, who gave a five-star hotel quite a problem because she required a grand piano to be installed in her room, and that the walls must be repainted to her preferred color.

He says Peter Asher of Peter and Gordon was also very specific about the airline because he was into collecting miles.

"He was more concerned about the airline than the talent fee," he says.

Then there's the Everly Brothers who, because they do not get along although they perform together, required that they ride in different limousines and take different entrances to the stage.

Samonte, however, says that not all foreign artists are difficult to work with.

He says that fortunately, most of the artists that he brought here, like The Cascades and Pat Upton of Spiral Starecase, have become personal friends and put in a good word for the Philippines.

Then after putting out all that money to organize the show, there is no assurance that it will make a profit. There is no such thing, he says, as a sure thing in the business of concert promotion.

He says there are cases when an act draws in a bigger crowd than expected, and also instances where the audience support came in way below expectations.

"I just rely on averaging. If I bring in six acts a year, I will just hope that more will make money," he says.

Bicol lovers keep low profile

LEGAZPI CITY—DAYS BEFORE VALENTINE'S Day, business establishments here have been cashing in on the occasion.

Flower prices are steadily climbing and will reach their peak tomorrow when most customers usually rush out to buy flowers for their loved ones, flower vendors here say.

At sidewalk stalls along Lapu-Lapu Street, a single long-stemmed rose (red or white) sells for P25 but vendors say it will likely shoot up to P50 to P75 apiece by Feb. 14 due to high demand.

A box of flowers containing three roses now priced at P100 will cost about P250 by tomorrow.

Other shops like Jardine de Legazpi opts to introduce new products and presentations not yet available in the market at a "reasonable price," and will not increase prices on other products.

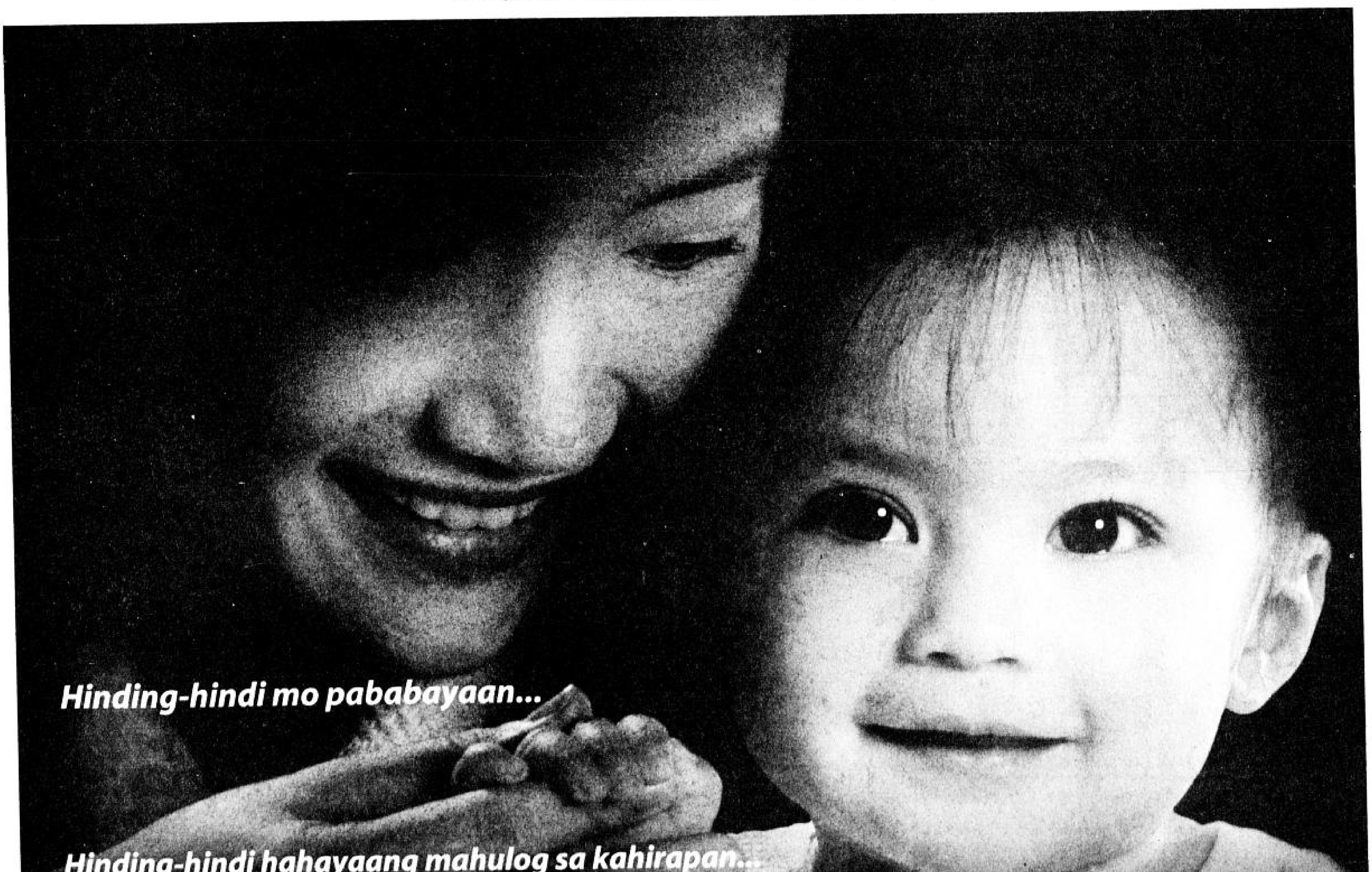
The rise in fuel prices prompted the shop to innovate and do away with promotions during Valentine's.

"We cannot do free delivery now because of the rise in fuel prices," shopowner Erlinda Julianda says.

But for William Molina, owner of Grand Events flower and party shop, delivering the flowers for free is what lures more customers to their shop at the 2nd floor of the Pacific Mall in Legazpi City.

They sell Holland roses, along with poppies and other flower varieties which he says come from Baguio City. A basket of assorted flowers with heart-shaped balloons and a small teddy bear sells for P250 while a bigger basket of

BICOL/ B2-5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Valentine's Day across the nation

MARITES Taborada, saleslady of Mom The Flower Shop shows a dozen red tulips in a vase worth P1,500.

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Shop smart on day of hearts

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—LOVE IS IN THE AIR as lovers, young and old, look forward to the most romantic day of the year, "the celebration of Valentine's Day."

Despite the hard times, many still manage to show affection to their love ones through flowers, according to some Cebu florists.

Managers of high-end flower shops, however, admit that many of their clients mainly avail of their flower arrangements because of the freebies and discounts they are offering.

Promotional packages are offered to suit the tastes of their clients, says Che-che Mayola, manager of Le Fleur Garden and Decor Shop.

Mayola says their clients receive free imported chocolates or an Australian-made stuffed toy for every purchase of P1,500 bouquet of flowers.

"We had distributed fliers to different schools [prior to Valentine's day] and the holders of these fliers would be getting a 10-percent discount for our flowers, Mayola says.

The most common and saleable flowers, according to Mayola, are the Holland roses, tulips and carnation.

She says the prices have gone up twice from the original price during the first two weeks of February.

Mayola says each stalk of Holland rose costs P350 from the P150 regular price while a dozen of tulips now cost P1,950, Equator roses P3,000 and carnation for P1,500.

The price of a bouquet of mixed flowers has also gone up from P5,000 to P8,000 depending on the kinds of flowers and their arrangements, Mayola adds.

Gilbert Padilla, in charge of Floris de Cielito, tells the INQUIRER they started giving five to 10 percent discounts to their early bird clients who ordered flowers between Feb. 1 and 10.

Padilla says their red roses are the most in demand.

A bouquet of red roses costs P1,600 from its original price of P700, a dozen Holland tulips cost P2,000 and the mixed flowers consist of liliums, Malaysian mums, carnation and orchids are sold at P800 to P1,500, Padilla says.

Floris de Cielito also charges a minimum of P50 for their deliveries within Cebu City.

But those who cannot afford to buy a bouquet of expensive flowers can get beautiful and inexpensive ones at the Freedom Park in Carbon, Magallanes Street and along Sto. Rosario Parish Church.

Pao Lim, a 27-year-old businessman, says he could buy three beautiful red roses wrapped in a fancy plastic just outside Sto. Rosario Church for as low as P75. A bouquet of red roses only cost P400 in Sto. Rosario.

"It's very practical and we don't have to pay more for beautiful flowers. They have roses and mums and when arranged creatively could serve as beautiful gifts for my girlfriend," he says.

Eduarda Hayag says she sells a bouquet of red roses for P400 during the Valentine season from its original price of P150.

Three stalks of red roses mixed with white aster flowers and placed in a box are sold at P30 to P50, Hayag says.

Hayag, who has been selling flowers at Sto. Rosario Church, says many students and even professionals troop to their stalls during Valentine's Day because of their cheap flowers.

Even a student can afford to buy a rose for P5 or one with rose with a photo for P10, Hayag says.

Nevy Gacayan, who has been selling imported Holland roses at the Freedom Park, says it has been their practice to double the prices of their flowers during this time because of high demand.

A dozen white Holland roses are sold at P110 while the red Holland roses are at P140, Gacayan says. A bouquet of mixed mums and roses costs P500.

For those like 30-year-old Dennis Sawi, whose loved ones are in other countries, the Internet is where they can order their fresh flowers.

Sawi says he used the Internet to order the flowers that were delivered to his girlfriend, a nurse who is based in New York City.

Sawi says he surfed the Net and filled up an application form. With his credit card, he says he ordered fresh flowers worth P2,000 to be delivered to his girlfriend. He says he has been doing this over the last two years. "I surprised her by sending her red flowers on Valentine's Day and she loved it," Sawi says, recalling the first time he sent her flowers.

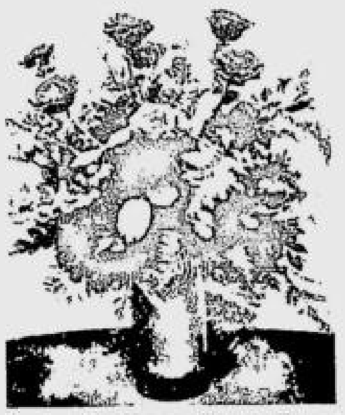
Flowers? It will cost you

IN BAGUIO, PRICES OF flowers vary, depending on where you buy them. INQUIRER's Northern Luzon Bureau came up with this price list.

King Louis Flowers
Gerbera—P30/stem
Carnation—P50/stem
One dozen—P350
Tulip—P350 (one pot, three stumpy flowers)
Rose—one dozen, P250
Three pieces in a box—P300
Stargazer—P150/stem
Assorted bouquet—P350

Flower Shoppe (Mom and Pop's)
Gerbera—P30/stem
Carnation—P50/stem
Tulip—P350 (one pot, three stumpy flowers)
Stargazer—P130/stem
Astromeria—P30/stem
Calla Lily—P75/stem

IN BICOL, a basket of assorted flowers with heart-shaped balloons and a small teddy bear sells for P250 while a bigger basket sells for P500.



IN MANILA, The Flower Farm sells a dozen roses from Holland for P3,800; while three pieces go for P1,050. The roses come in two varieties, single bud and spray (many buds in one stem). PHOTOS BY EV ESPIRITU

Anthoniuz Floral Design (La Azotea)
Rose—P30/stem; one dozen, P350
Malaysian mums— P20/stem; one dozen, P250-350

Flowers for the Students
Rose—P8-10/stem; one dozen-P85-100
Arranged (3 pcs)—P45
Long stemmed, extra large—P50-60/2 dozens
Cymbidium orchid—P15
Chrysanthemum—P30-80/dozen (all colors)
Anthurium—P50/dozen
Birds of Paradise—P35/dozen
Mums—P20/dozen
Bachelor's buttons— P15/dozen

Compiled by Xaris Tamayo, EV Espiritu

Topsellers at National Bookstore

LOVERS' DAY PROMPTS AN INcrease in the sales of certain items. At National Bookstore, these are:

High-end ballpen (brand—Cross, Parker, Inoxcrom, Waterman); electronic or palm organizers, novelty items, greeting cards, photo albums, scrapbook album and. planners/organizers, diaries, desk accessories, stuff toys

Cash registers ring on V-day

By Cyrain G. Cabueñas
PDI Visayas Bureau

BORONGAN, EASTERN SAMAR—The spirit of St. Valentine does not only touch the hearts of Estehanons, it drifts into their cash registers as well.

Owners and managers of restaurants, hotels, disco houses, and flower shops of this capital town have been cashing in on their promos and games days before Valentine's day.

Restaurateur Rowena Fabula, 40, says many couples have made their reservations already for her restaurant's special offer. Some have signified to join the restaurant's contest for the search for Mr. and Ms Valentines while many are after the free drinks.

Information desk officer Shiela Tabo says Doña Vicenta Hotel offered 50 percent discount to the first patrons and it is now fully booked.

Clients have free use of the hotel's swimming pool and get free breakfast.

Pool Site Disco owner Simplicio Ty has been bringing in performers since Feb. 8. He has prepared a dating game for lovers, a dance and singing contest for all, and a kissing contest for married couples. Lots of prizes await the customers on Valentine's day, he said.

Florist Merlyn Alegre says her red American roses are selling like hotcakes. She gives discount and offers free delivery to her customers.

Not every business establishment in town, however, has takers.

CYRAIN CABUEÑAS/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

NORMAN Boco, manager of Natad. Natad, waray term for yard, is one of the favorite hangouts of tourists and politicians.

A number of stall owners at the uptown mall have offered 15-50 percent off their goods' prices yet there is only a trickle of customers.

Importer Sergio Afable says business is slow because not many people are used to buying imported clothes or chocolates. He says many folks still spend money for "ukay-ukay" clothes and local confectionery.

Bookstore cashier Jomar Gayoso says their Valentine cards are gathering dust on the shelves.

Young people prefer phone texts and the Internet because they are delivered at once and are much cheaper, he says.

Despite the imminent commercial gains or losses of business-minded folks, both the youth and the elderly Estehanons are looking forward to celebrating Valentine's day heartily.

Federation of Senior Citizens of Borongan (FESCB) spokesperson Maria Alar, 77, says their group has already prepared the activities for their annual Valentine's day celebration.

Alar, a retired teacher, says the FESCB has about 400 active members. She says the group gathers three times a year—summer, Christmas and Valentines day.

"We gather because we want to enjoy our twilight years. We have to make the most of our remaining opportunities before we finally leave this world," she says. "Except for the ball games, we have practically the same activities with the youth: dance, sing along, Mr & Mrs. valentine, and some parlor games. But we always start with a thanksgiving Mass," she adds.

High school teacher Nancy Docabo, 52, says she prefers staying at home with her husband and kids to parties and outdoor activities. Every day should be Valentine's day, she says.

Youth leader Emelyn Galo, 18, on the other hand, says the youth of today makes every given occasion a cause for celebration because they are young and would like to enjoy life to the full.

But for seminarian Anthony Cepeda, Valentine's day is just an escape from the harsh realities of life and just another profligate practice dangled by businessmen.

LOVE BLOOMS IN DAVAO

Eat all you can for P96; drink all you can for P125

By Germelina A. Lacorte
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—FOR LESTER Damron Silva, 27, a stroll in the mall and the movies with a special friend would normally cost him P400. But that's about half the cost of dinners-for-two that fine dining restaurants here are cooking up for Valentine's Day.

On the day of hearts, however, Silva would be very busy turning chicken lechon at Kookel's where he works as a cook and would have no time left to go out.

"Firing squad," he laughs, referring to someone caught without a partner on Valentine's Day and he shivered at the prospect, "I'd rather stay home and sleep."

But love and passion may not be hard to come by for those with money to spend. Hotels and restaurants are bent on cashing it in and offers an array of choices.

"Love at the Marco Polo-Davao features a buffet dinner at Café Marco or Lotus Court for only P688 or a Mongolian dinner buffet al fresco at the Pool Terrace for only P488," says Art Boncato, hotel sales and marketing director. Every group of five, he says, gets a bottle of red or white wine for free.

One can also spend the night and have an intimate dinner with their loved ones in a superior room for only P3,888.

"We were fully-booked on Valentine's Day last year and this year, we look forward to the same," says Patricia Joven, advertising and promotion officer of the Apo View Hotel. "After the successful Asean Tourism Forum, prospects are bullish and people have money to spend."

Apo View is cooking up three special events: "Love at Café Josefina" offers a buffet dinner for P1,300 per couple, featuring live piano and acoustic guitar performers, a round of red or white wine and a special keepsake for couples on Valentine's Day.

At Apo View's Liquid Bar, "The Love Pill" offers live band performances from DJ Tres and BJ Kilo for a minimum charge of P150 that is consumable while the hotel's Blue Rim Jazz Bar offers "Margarita in the house" featuring saxophonist, pianist, singer Margarita Ignacio from 9 p.m. onwards.

Royale Mandaya features a date for two on its Pasag Grill, a special light dinner for two at the hotel poolside for only P500, with live romantic background music and entertainment, special souvenir gift and a chance to win exciting raffle prizes.

At the hotel's Kamayo Café, a "Date to Remember" includes a romantic lunch and dinner buffet and special souvenir gift items.

"Get smitten with passion," says the Valentine Interlude poster from the Eden Nature Park, a half-hour ride away from downtown Davao, offers dinner at P350 per person at the Vista Kiosk overlooking the city. For P3,660, one can have a stay overnight at the resort's Vista Cottage or the Holiday Lodge, partake a dinner and breakfast, enter a fishing village or go on a guided tour around the picturesque mountain park.

But for those who are too lazy to go out of town, Filipino buffet restaurant Nanay Bebeng at the heart of Davao offers Valentine buffet special of home-cooked Filipino dishes for P300 per person.

Tulip Grand Plaza at the Oriental Buffet Palace along Matina also offers a P295 Valentine buffet with bottomless drinks, an entertainment from a band from 6 in the evening onwards.

Ritz Garden Hotel offers a special Valentine treat of P1,999 that includes an overnight accommodation, a free ticket to a Valentine show, "Fall in laugh with Bambam," dinner buffet for two at Garden Oases Resort and Restaurant, breakfast in bed for two, and a bottle of sparkling wine.

But celebrating love need not be costly. At The Venue, there is drink all you can until midnight for P125 on Feb. 14 to 18. There's date and eat at the Impit Purok at the Matina Town Square—eat-all-you can buffet for P96.

For those with much, much less to spend, there are videoke bars all over the city where they can sing love songs to their hearts content while gulping down a bottle of beer or two.

From Valentine gift suggestions at the Victoria Plaza mall to the Diamond power peels offered by the skin doctors, to skin shining, spa treatments and wellness offered by BioEssence and Bahia spas, business firms with anything to sell are bent on making money on the day of love.

The array of mouth-watering offers is tempting but Peter Laviña, a Davao city councilor, says he would rather spend Valentine's Day at home, for he knows that most restaurants and hotels are fully booked on that day. "Except for the concerts," he says, pausing to consider.

Joji Ilagan-Bian, businesswoman, says her family has always celebrated the day together.

"Normally, we start the day with a Mass to thank God for a year of peace and then, we have dinner in our house," she says. "But this year, we are going to Singapore and will be on a Valentine cruise to Phuket, Thailand and Penang, Malaysia and just have fun and enjoy our togetherness."

She says even the 12 percent expanded value-added tax on drinks and dinners will not dampen people with money to splurge on the day of hearts.

"Knowing the Filipinos who are great lovers, I am sure they will still celebrate this day. Most probably, they'll scrimp a little but nevertheless, they will still find creative ways to enjoy the day with their family and loved ones," she adds.

Minding the small fishermen

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Antonio T. Hernandez

THE COUNTRY'S MARINE RESOURCES cover about 220 million hectares, making the Philippines among the top fish producers in the world.

It is thus ironic that while the fishery sector resources (sea and inland water resource) far exceed that of land-based agricultural sector, the direct dependents on the former comprise only a tenth of the latter.

And most fisherfolk are just as marginalized, with the family size ranging from 8 to 12, and with a high degree of malnutrition.

It would then seem that the fruits of industry growth, if any, do not cascade adequately to the small fishermen. Ever wondered why?

Issues and concerns

The problems in the fisheries sector that adversely affect the small fishermen are:

1. Depleted traditional fishing grounds. Overfishing of traditional fishing grounds and destruction of habitats can be traced to past fishery management, which was focused solely on increasing fish catch; and to the weak enforcement of marine management measures resulting in the use of exploitative fishing methods—leading to accelerated depletion in shallow near-shore fishing grounds delineated for small fishers, to mangrove losses, to sea grass and coral reef degradation.

2. Ineffective allocation of fishery resources. Efforts to address this problem, like delineating specific coastal areas as municipal waters for the exclusive use of small fishermen, are rather muddled because of the ease by which the policy can be circumvented.

The recently issued DENR AO 24 that opened up coastal areas to big investors on a 25-year lease has sent jitters to environmentalists and small fishermen.

3. Inadequacy of fishery infrastructure. Poor transport facilities, storage and price information; the lack of appropriate and workable grades and standards; poor handling practices and conditions at fish landing sites lend to low value and volume of raw catch.

4. The socio-economic status of small fisherfolk that scares off private finance. Small fishermen tend to operate as individuals. They tend to move to where the catch is abundant.

Helpless sub-sector?

To hopefully improve the situation, we have to take the "bull by the horn" so to speak, and squarely face up to the need for, among others:

1. Technical and advisory assistance. Organizational/group strengthening and capacity building efforts need to be revisited and reinforced. So with extension services and fish inspection/quality control facilities in all regions; skills training in the culture of non-traditional species like grouper, crabs, tilapia, oyster, seaweeds and even pearls; assistance in shifting from fish capture to aquaculture activities, thereby allowing traditional fishing grounds to rest and regenerate.

Exposure to quality fish processing and marketing (dried, smoked, frozen, fermented, fish meal and on to canned or cured); without forgetting fishing paraphernalia and marine equipment maintenance.

2. Technology advancement. In distant fishing villages where processing has a demonstrated growth potential, there is the need to upgrade fish landing sites, ice plants and cold storage facilities. Local governments can help craft policies integral to their coastal resource management.

For larger-scale fish processing, it helps to obtain current international information on fish processing technologies, quality control and sanitation, and developments in high-value export products.

3. Quality standards. The need for standards and code of practice in processing traditional products to achieve uniformity in the quality of finished commodities thereby gaining better sales/patronage.

4. Best practices in financing value-added fishery products and marketing services. Cash flow approach with savings promotion features of evaluating credit should help inculcate financial discipline among the fishermen.

The value-chain interdependency in fishing projects—from raw catch to processed commodity—gives rise to the essentials of integration which may take on varied arrangements.

A joint venture with enterprises who possess the technology, and management expertise is one model. Fishers group contributes labor and use of fishing equipment; while a third-party financial institution may provide the equity and/or financing requirement.

Availability of credit support is essential. It should push and make the program run. And the institutional, the entrepreneurial preparation and technological intervention are thus afforded the opportunity to function.

5. Law enforcement. The importance of a determined law enforcement arm cannot be over-emphasized. The local government units, which are nearest to where the action is, cannot pass up on this responsibility.

Industry outlook

Positive developments should be anticipated as there are encouraging developments. These include:

- Continuing rapid demand growth for fish and fish products;
- Emergence of a wholistic management on rehabilitation, enhancement and sustainability of fishing resources worldwide; and
- Shift in types of species trawled and consumed toward the low-priced ones.

Government response should thus dwell on policy environment, on public investment needs and on establishing a sound institutional framework for coastal fisherfolks' financial access.

Financial access still looms as a major concern. Thus, specialized government banks (SGBs) established for countryside development may do well to reassess their financing philosophy.

Have our government-supported banks been reasonably development-oriented and truly been the pioneering models expected of them?

The question needs to be answered as if there's one sector that needs help, it's the fisheries sector.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is a Management and Development Finance Consultant, Chairman Team 7 Services and Management Corporation, National Director of PICPA and former SVP of Land Bank. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)

Bicol lovers ...

From page B2-3

the same design is sold for P500.

Their most expensive item is a P1,500 basket with two dozen roses.

At the LCC Mall, Valentine cards, stuffed toys and imported chocolates in all shapes and sizes adorn the atrium of the shopping center. A medium-sized teddy bear stuffed toy now sells for over P400.

Sampaguita Tourist Inn was already reporting an increase in the number of customers.

"We are usually fully booked by the 14th but will not be increasing room rates on Valentine's Day," says an attendant, who requested anonymity.

The inn is a popular getaway for couples and families alike.

Room rates still range from P150 (single bedroom) to P575 (double bedroom).

Restaurants have already been dishing out promos. The First Colonial Grill in Albay has come up with special packages for couples willing to spend over P1,000.

"We will reserve our function room for those who want exclusivity," says managing supervisor Jhing Muñoz.

For a minimum charge of P1, 500, couples can dine in a room accentuated with rose petals on the floor, scented candles, and soft music," Muñoz adds.

A special heart shaped valentine dish of chicken and pasta, "Chicken Valentina", was a hit last year at P250.

Other joints offer cheaper alternatives.

At the Golden Boat restaurant and Videoke Bar, a buffet dinner with a heart-shaped cake, fruits and coconut jelly for dessert, costs P150, says sales and marketing manager head Gemma Sarte.

Spending little

Although restos and hotels get swamped here by yuppies and the rich on Valentine's Day, some Legazpeños opt to celebrate according to their tight budget.

"We'll probably go out and stroll by the sea away from the kids and eat some goto afterwards," says Aquinas University teacher Sara Marie Aviado. "It's not important that you spend for it, anyway. What matters is you spend time together as a couple," she says.

Twenty-three year old librarian Sheira Terol says she'll probably "watch" the lovapalooza event organized by Bar 101. *Leo Martin B. Ganace, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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DAY 2
International Workshop on Technopreneurship • PCE National Business Plan Competition Brief • Elevator Pitches by Various Business Plan Competition Winners & Runners-up • Funding Options • Awarding of PCE-ENEDA Cup Winners • GO NEGOSYO Concert with Orange and Lemons

DAY 3
The Franchise Boom: Now is the Time to Get Started • Safeguarding and Optimizing Your Intellectual Capital • The Entrepreneur: Know Thyself • Finding Your Opportunities of a Lifetime: Where do Entrepreneurs Get Their Ideas • Moving Innovations to Market • The Art of Start-ups: Critical Stage and How to Survive It • FORUM: Financing Programs that Work

It Just Got Better

PLDT OnCall is Your Bet Against Growing Competition

Simple comparisons can explain it best. In 2001 there were about 6 countries competing with the Philippines in the contact center industry. Last year there were 30, including Eastern Europe, China and South Africa.

Also, the nature of the services itself is changing. While it was once voice-related services penetrating the BPO business, countries like India and China are now investing heavily in technologies to replace them. Our competitors are also training their sights on higher-margin jobs like animation, accounting, and financial analysis, areas once identified as Filipino strengths.

But we still have the relative edge. A Philippine online newspaper has cited studies showing "higher staff tenure and better customer satisfaction ratings than India" for our industry. And there is the well-known case of a top US computer manufacturer which rerouted tech support calls from India back to the US, for their agents' "inability to solve problems".

That's what a contact center is all about. You make money on your ability to carry out key functions for clients and to solve problems. With competition growing as fierce as it is, ultimately its quality over quantity that will determine the winner. You need to concentrate on winning the customer satisfaction game.

But you can hardly do that when you have to deal with other inherent complexities of running a contact center. Things like managing the contact center platform, telecoms infrastructure, system upgrades or downtime can take an enormous toll on your energies, not to mention your resources. That's why PLDT OnCall partnered with Avaya, the world leader in contact center solutions takes care of all those worries for you.

Today we have more than 112,000 agents on the line who earned their companies about $1.5 Billion in 2005. That's certainly a far cry from five years ago when we had just 2,400 agents worth $24 Million. It's a phenomenon that is only growing bigger; PLDT OnCall can help you catch this rising wave.

Experts have cited our cultural affinity with the US, low labor prices, and modern telecommunications infrastructure as key advantages in winning the BPO market. We're slowly finding out that we may need every competitive edge we can get. Now with PLDT OnCall, you've got it.

To find out more about PLDT OnCall, log on to www.pldtoncall.com.ph or email bizsol@pldt.com.ph, or give us a call at 874-7474.

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Contact center operators are going to find out very soon that PLDT OnCall will be fully behind them for crucial support. For operators of almost any size contact center they are going to enjoy:

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FREE Remote simple services- user level modifications that includes abbreviated dial lists, announcement set-up, call coverage paths and more.

Remote Complex Services (FREE 10 hours of support/month)- system, network, or application level modifications that includes IP Agent configuration and changes, hunt group configuration, feature access codes and more.

Photographed at M Cafe

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2006
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Find the best way to start getting connected with loved ones.

See inside for details

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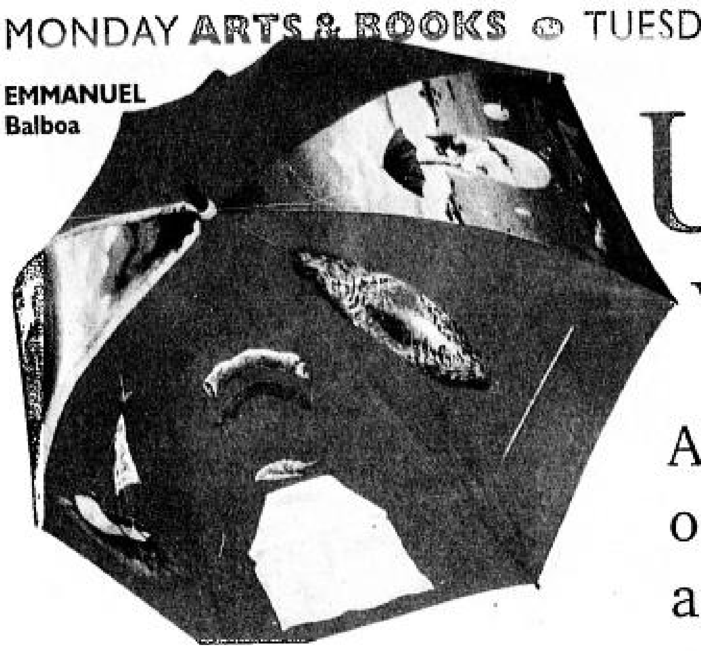
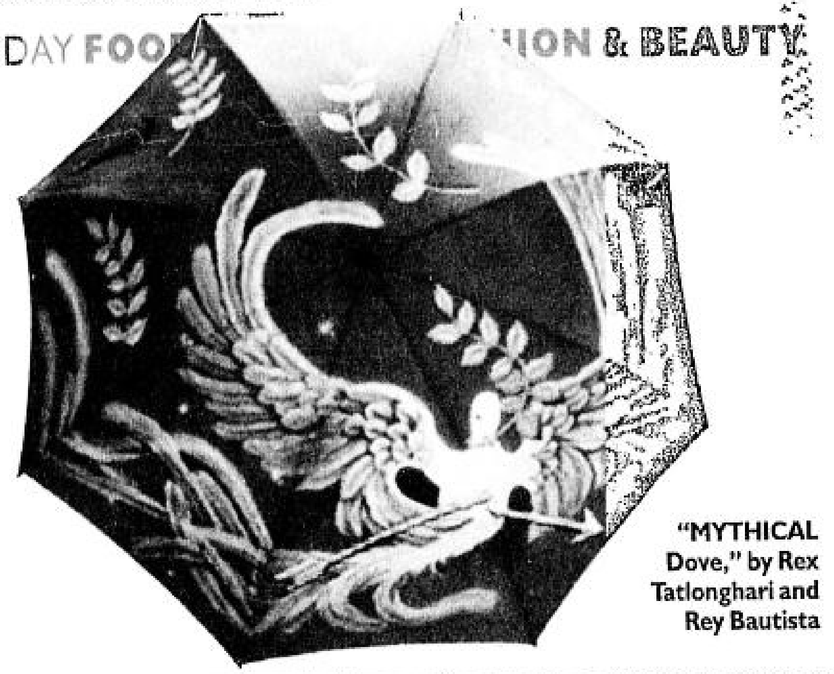


EMMANUEL Balboa

Umbrellas with a heart

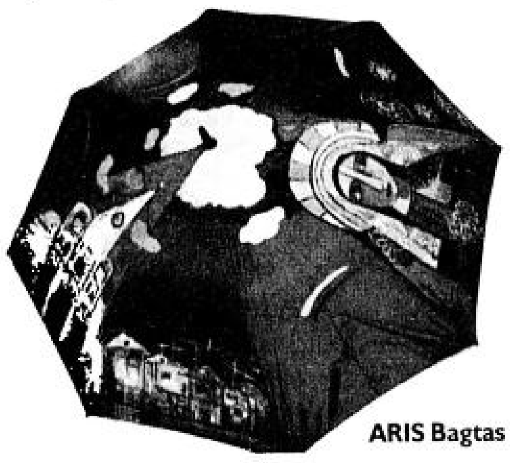
AAP artists respond to the SOS of a unique charity for orphans and abandoned children



"MYTHICAL Dove," by Rex Tatlonghari and Rey Bautista

By Jessica Jalandoni-Robillos
Contributor

NESTLED IN A NOOK OF greenery somewhere behind the National Historical Institute at Rizal Park is Kanlungan ng Sining, home to the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP). It is an art enclave, a fenced-in garden with curving concrete paths punctuated by sculptures surrounded by hedges or concrete benches.



ARIS Bagtas

Against the back wall is a gallery-cum-atelier which these days is strewn with a huge number of golf umbrellas bursting with color.

The umbrellas are not being prepared for the sporadic downpours, but for the proverbial rainy day. Some 50 members of the AAP are painting these in an effort to help alleviate the plight of homeless youngsters, in a project called "Shades of Art, Works from the Heart." Proceeds from the works will benefit about a thousand kids who reside at the SOS Children's Villages Philippines.

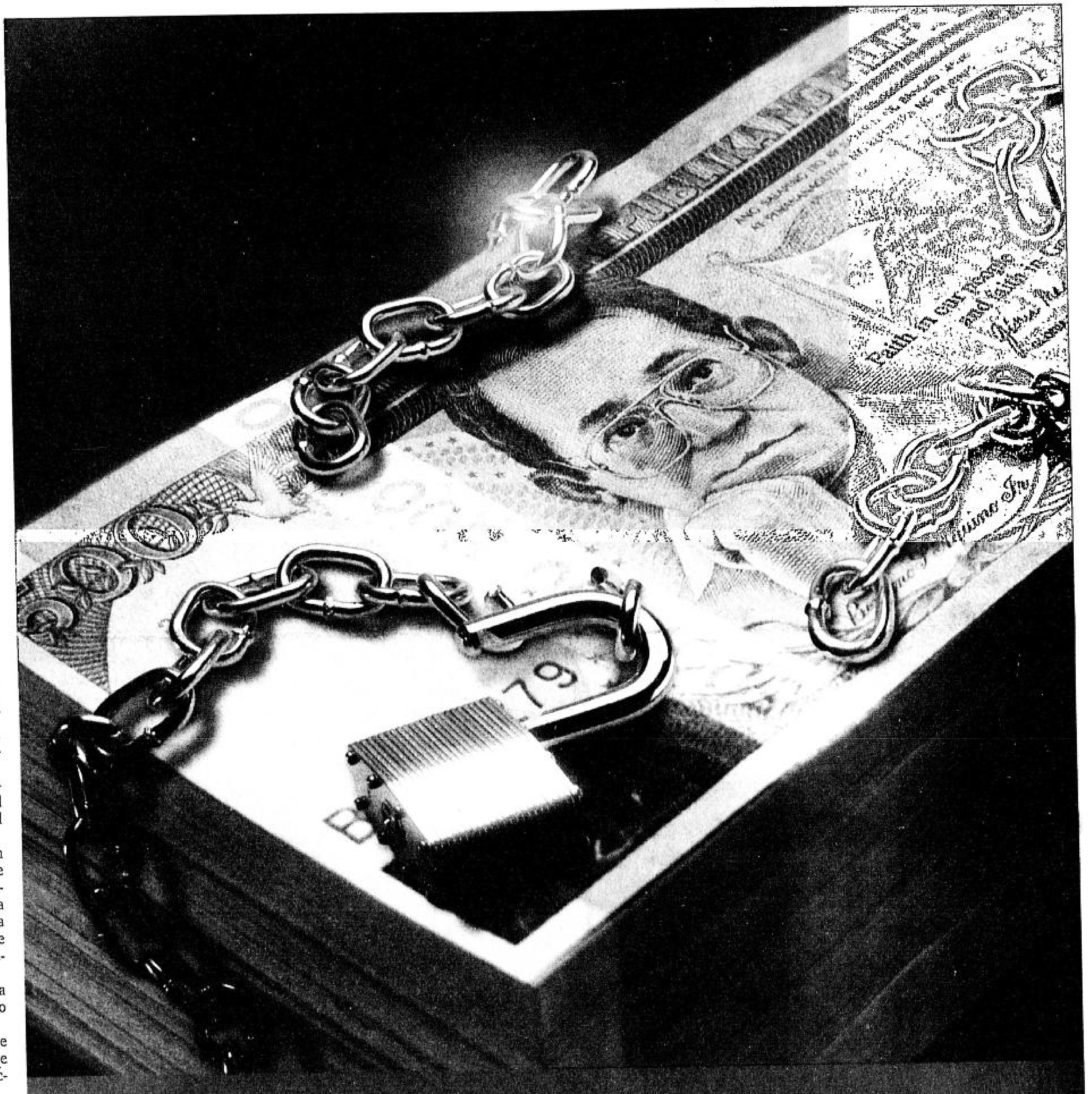
The villages are foster communities of 14-20 houses, providing shelters to orphans and abandoned children. Each house is watched over by a "mother."

Siblings are kept together, in keeping with the organization's mission, says Philippine SOS director Bienvenido Delgado, of providing them "with a new family setting where a child grows with brothers and sisters and a mother… If no family exists or if it is incapable of fulfilling its tasks, then it must be replaced."

SOS, says Delgado, practices the umbrella principle: "When it rains, we know what to do."

Fidel Sarmiento, AAP president, says the artworks pay tribute to the work of SOS, since the umbrellas symbolize shelter and protection.

UMBRELLAS/ C3



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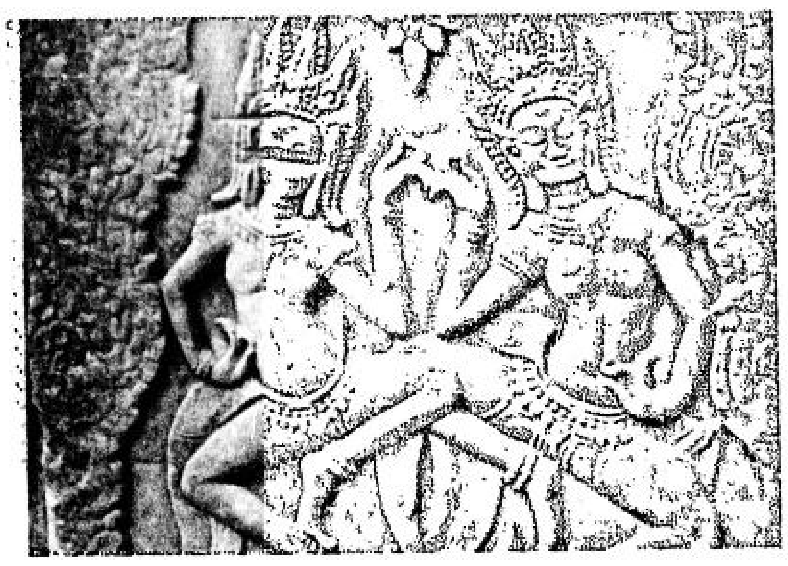
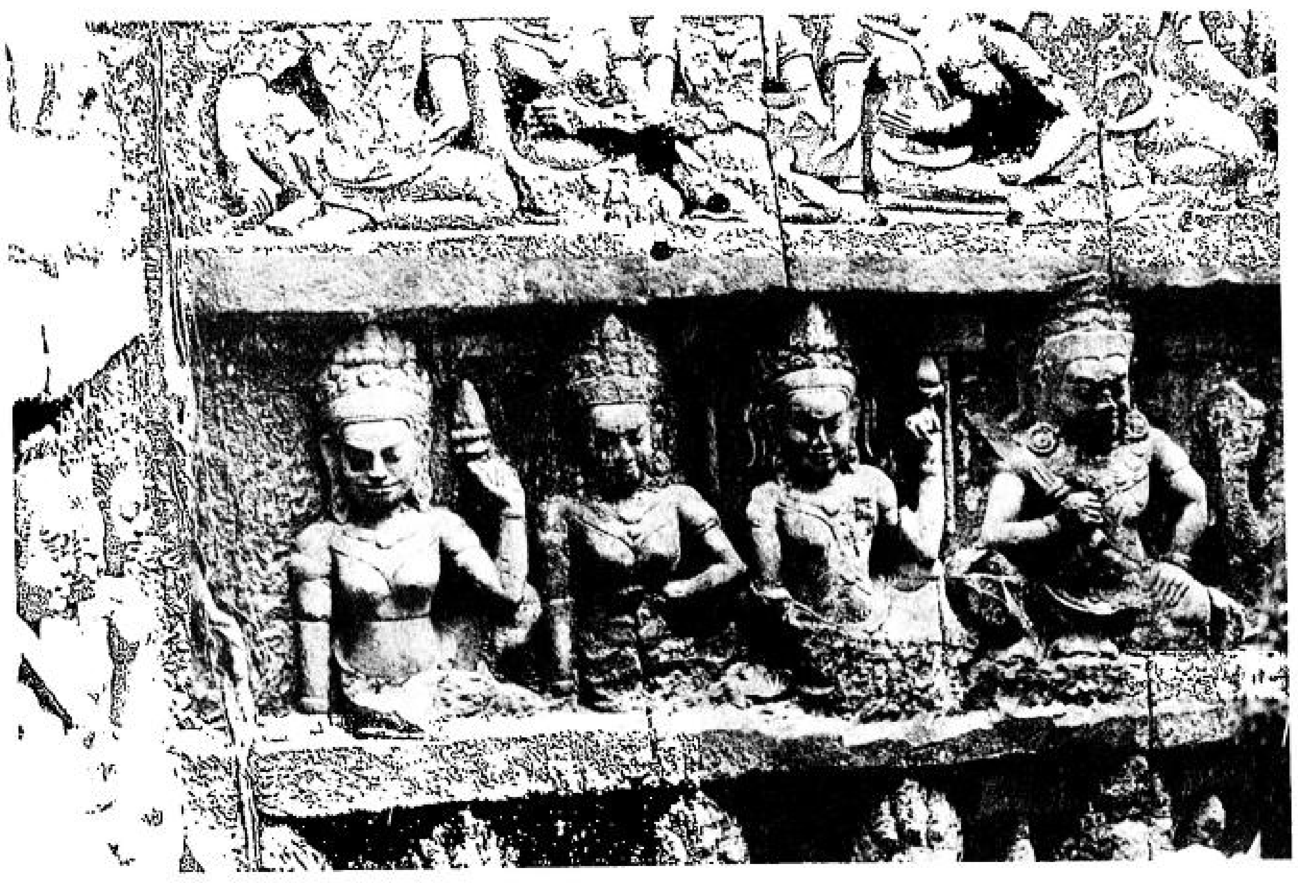


AN APSARA carved in stone continues to dance even if its eyes have been gouged out, casualty of the Indochinese war.



DELICATE carving on the walls of Angkor Wat, as shown in a 1968 photo, adds a layer of psychic meaning to the temple that is now lost.

Return to Angkor Wat

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

IN THE SUMMER OF 1968, MY FRIEND Ruy told me he traveled from Saigon where he lived to the jungle deep in Cambodia to see incredible stone temples.

The collection of temples he saw were scattered over a large area in a forsaken place called Angkor. Although each was spectacular in its own way, he said, Angkor Wat overwhelmed everything else.

Ruy thought that I should see them, so I took his advice and went. It turned out to be a life-defining moment for me.

I was an architecture student then. The visit to Angkor revealed a career path: I discovered that I wanted to keep old monuments alive.

We arrived by propeller aircraft at sunset. From the little airport, the dusty highway led in a straight line directly to Angkor Wat. I was totally unprepared for the overwhelming sight. At the end of the highway, the five towers of Angkor Wat rose from what appeared to be terraces of stone, stunning me completely.

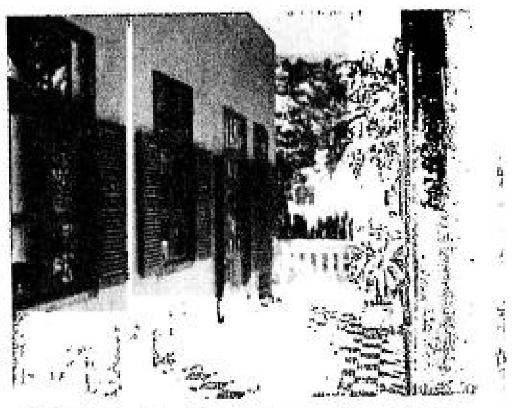
I got to Angkor Wat at sunrise the following morning. It was silent. I was the only person there.

I discovered that after entering the enormous temple complex through a causeway crossing a wide moat, there were a series of rectangular covered galleries totally built in stone around open courtyards in diminishing size, one inside the other like the rings around an onion.

After entering the main gateway at the end of the causeway, a ceremonial walkway led from the main entrance to the depths of Angkor Wat, passing from one gallery and its surrounding courtyard to the next, from cool, dark covered areas to large open-air courtyards under bright sunlight.

The walk went in a straight line leading to the rectangular raised center esplanade with a tower at each of its corners. The fifth tower at the center was the highest, most prominent, and obviously most special.

The processional walk left the outside world at the edge of the moat, the first layer of Angkor Wat. Each gallery was a transition to another layer, a space of deeper quiet than the last, until reaching absolute stillness in stone temple chamber under the main tower.



WINNER of the 2002 Unesco Asia-Pacific Cultural Heritage Award, an old Buddhist monastery was restored and reused as the Center for Khmer Studies in Siem Reap.

Symbolical

Symbolically, he who walks the causeway passes through the main entrance, through a succession of walled courtyards to reach the central chamber that once contained a statue of Vishnu. The walk is a procession that brings the pilgrim back in time to the first age in the creation of the universe.

Angkor Wat, and the other temples in Angkor as well, replicate the Hindu spatial universe. The central tower represents Mount Meru, the mythical center of the Hindu religion, the four towers are the smaller peaks around it.

The open courtyards are the continents, the moat is the ocean, and the naga (serpent) that flank the stone causeway over the moat is the symbolic rainbow bridge that starts man off on his journey to reach the abode of the gods.

Along the causeway, at the entrance gates, covering the pavilion walls, and on all the exposed surfaces were stone sculptures so exquisite they had to be admired with many short pauses along the way, each stop adding to the serenity of the experience of following the temple's stone pathway to reach the gods. After ascending the high stone steps to the central tower, it was all peace.

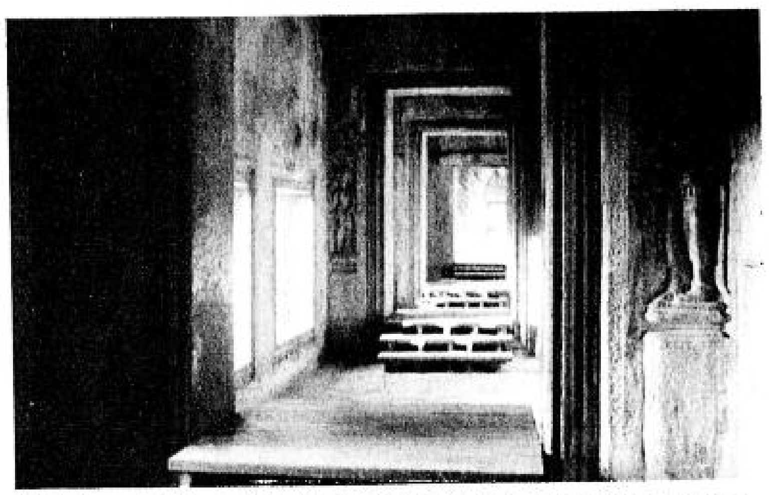
Since that experience, I often wondered if that peace was still at Angkor Wat.

On my recent return there, I arrived once again in a propeller aircraft at sunset. The highway no longer led straight to Angkor Wat. It now went the opposite way, past one hotel after the other, to the town of Siem Reap where there were more hotels, souvenir shops and restaurants for the crowd of tourists walking around.

I got to Angkor Wat at sunrise the following morning. This time I was not alone. What looked like hundreds of tourists arrived before I did, and I was told that more would come later.

The sheer number of people prevented me from repeating the processional walk of my memory, but I walked, anyway. This time it was no longer silent or meditative.

The sculpture that gave life and meaning to Angkor Wat was gone. The surviving stone statues were disfigured, either beheaded or simply chopped off their bases, victims of the terrible Cambodian war or the equally terrible forces of the international antique trade. The reliefs that used to line the walls of pavilion corridors were gone. The walls were totally bare.



WITH most of the wall carvings either vandalized or destroyed, the corridors of the vast Angkor Wat today are empty skeletons of what they once were.

A SMALL Buddhist shrine deep within the stone recesses of the Bayon at Angkor Thom shows that the temples are still a part of local spiritual life. Or is the shrine really for attracting tourist alms?

It eclipses other Cambodian heritage sites that also need conservation

Empty

Today's Angkor Wat is a bare, lifeless empty shell.

Angkor has survived since its construction in the mid-12th century. It is still a monument of amazing grandeur unlike anything in the world. It deserves the assistance and funding by foreign governments and international agencies to conserve its crumbling temples.

It is such an amazing place that it totally deserves to be visited by tourists, and the Cambodian government knows that.

Angkor is well prepared for the tourism industry. Visitors must pay US$20 per day to visit the monuments located within a large national park where tourism facilities are well laid out.

In the park, no hotels or unauthorized new development is allowed. Only original residents of the area are allowed to continue living there.

Tourism contributes heavily to the Cambodian economy. Many of the locals I spoke to looked at Angkor as an income-earning commodity, a lifeline.

The same people all revered Angkor as the country's national symbol. Its image is on the Cambodian flag and on countless products including mineral water. The national beer is Angkor Beer.

The new Angkor updated my perspective on heritage as a tourism resource. Although the system could stand some improvement, Angkor is a property that has organized itself as a tourism resource rather well.

However, it eclipses all other Cambodian heritage sites in grandeur and earning power so that government attention is focused almost solely on it to the detriment of the other temples—urban and rural heritage in the country that is so endangered that, if conservation does not come soon, the sites will vanish.

Feedback is welcome at afvillalon@hotmail.com

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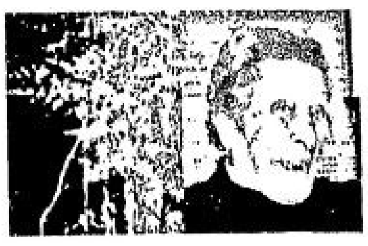
VISUAL ARTS

Spanish video artist at Instituto Cervantes

Spanish video artist Sally Gutiérrez will present her short film "Manola coge el autobús" (Manola Gets the Bus) on Feb. 16, 6 p.m., Patio de las Orquídeas, Instituto Cervantes Bldg., 855 T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila.



SCENE from "Manola"

Gutiérrez studied Fine Arts in Madrid, and lived and worked in Berlin and New York for several years. Gutiérrez has exhibited her work both in Spain and abroad in galleries, museums and film festivals.

Her 2005 short film, "Manola coge el autobús," was presented in the prestigious Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid last October. She is in the Philippines on a grant from Casa Asia and the Ministry of Culture of Spain.

Pettyjohn pottery at Artspace

Jon Pettyjohn and Tessy San Juan-Pettyjohn are holding a joint exhibit at the large gallery of Artspace in Makati's Glorietta 4 until Feb. 24. The Pettyjohns, known as the parents of Philippine pottery, are exhibiting 70 expressionistic works including a series called "Picasso's Guitar," as well as a jar of square slabs placed one atop the other.

"I am now experimenting on bolder pieces," says San Juan-Pettyjohn, who used to be known for her fine and feminine works.

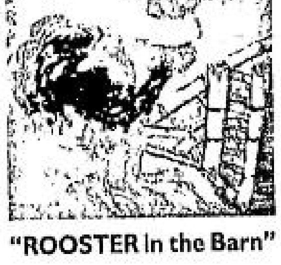
And Pettyjohn, who used to call himself the "unknown craftsman," says, "I have become quite expressionistic."

Edsa photos at Alcove

Alcove Gallery and Retrato Photo Library will present "Edsa 1: 20 Years After," Feb. 14-28. The exhibit will feature photographs of the country's fight for democracy, the people and the events that occurred during, before and after the revolution. Alcove Gallery is at Filipinas Heritage Library along Makati Avenue, Ayala Triangle, Makati. Call 8921801.

Limpe at 828

Julius Limpe will open his 13th solo exhibit on Feb. 16, 6 p.m., at Gallery 828, 4/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong. "From Rooster to Dog, Year 2006" features 20 paintings with subjects carrying Limpe's trademark fish and floral.



"ROOSTER in the Barn"

Art appreciation

Art Informal offers a one-day critical art appreciation lecture by Carlos Palanca awardee Myra Go on Feb. 18, 3-6 p.m. The lecture is open to all art enthusiasts, collectors, students, and professional artists. Art Informal is at 277 Connecticut St., East Greenhills, Mandaluyong. Call 7258518.

Art contest at Eastwood

Eastwood City and the Art Discovery and L dation Inc. (ADLFI) will hold an on-the-spot painting competition on Feb. 26, 7 a.m.-12 n wood City Walk, Libis, QC. It will be the culm wood City's Arts Month celebration this month 6876770 to 74 or 0918-9519989 and 0918-

Santos at Boston

José Santos III presents "Phases," until M Boston Gallery, 72 Boston St., Cubao, QC.

Stamp art

The Philippine Postal Corporation feature Dog New Year greetings stamps series. Post Dario C. Rama said the stamps, souvenir sh first-day covers are on sale at the Philatelic S 203, Liwasang Bonifacio 1000 Manila and all of the Philippine Postal Corporation. Call 52

'Halo-Halo' at UP

The UP College of Fine Arts, Department munication/Industrial Design will hold an ex

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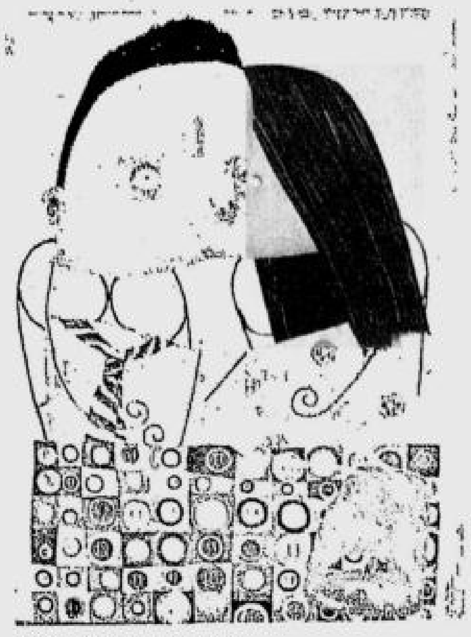
Farley del Rosario's sappy Valentine themes


"INTENSE Incense"

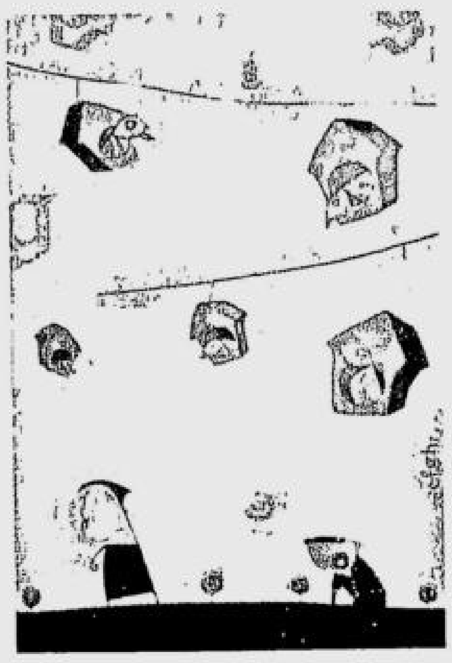
FARLEY DEL ROSARIO'S exciting art is on display at Gallery Nine and Gallery Big.

Del Rosario's show is much awaited since his last series of darling round-eyed, long-nosed, curlicue-armed boys and girls, which earned praise from critics and collectors.

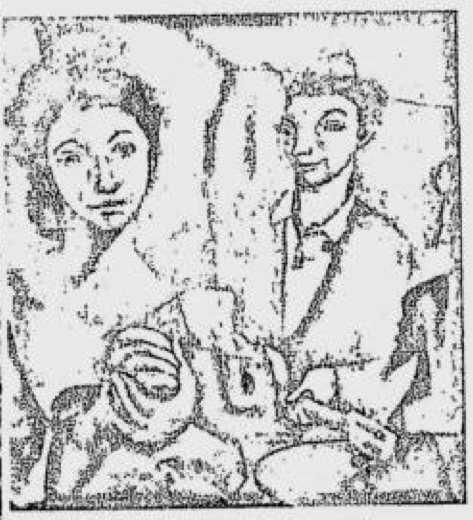
The refreshingly new characters are presented in various lovers' poses, from whispering endearments to giving flowers and candy.

Del Rosario lends a child's wonder replete with contrasts in line and color, giving a charming twist to otherwise sappy Valentine themes.

Call 6877302 for Gallery Nine in Megamall or 8954516 for Gallery Big, Makati.

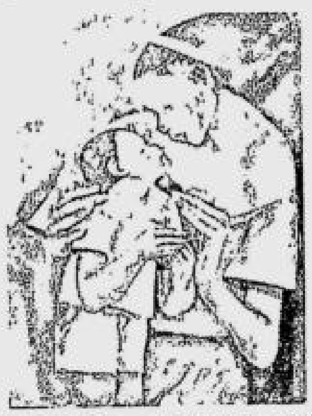

"NO Vacancy"

Romantic art at Joaquin


"SERENADING," by Manny Garibay

"EMBRACE," A PAINTING EXHIBIT ON romantic love, courtship, passion, motherly love as well as objects of love, beauty and affection, is running until Feb. 21 in Galerie Joaquin (371 P. Guevarra St. and Montessori Lane, Bgy. Addition Hills, San Juan, Metro Manila). Call 7239253/7239418 or visit www.galeriejoaquin.com.

The show features works of Mario Parial, Marcel Antonio, Manny Garibay, Lydia Velasco, Dominic Rubio, Jerry Morada, Vincent de Pio, Bayani Ray Acala, Elmer Roslin and members of the Guevarra Group of Artists.


"MOTHER and Child," by Lydia Velasco

Umbrellas with a heart

From page C1

Painting them is a welcome respite from the usual medium of oil or acrylic on canvas, he adds.

Printing ink, normally utilized in the silkscreen process, was chosen for the umbrellas for it dries quickly, adheres very well to the waterproof material, doesn't crack, and will not run if exposed to precipitation, thus making the umbrella truly useable.

The artists aim to finish embellishing 150 umbrellas by the end of the month.

European origins

Founded on Feb. 29, 1964, SOS Philippines was a result of the efforts of the Austrian couple Dr. George and Suzie Winternitz, who sponsored a child in an SOS Village in Europe in 1957. After visiting the child, they raised the idea of putting up the care facilities here.

WEWET David, Bernadette Bueta and Giovanni de la Rosa

In 1963 (by then they had been residing the Philippines for 30 years, owing to the doctor's post as consul), they arranged a series of lectures and press conferences by Dr. Hermann Gmeiner, pioneer of SOS-Kinderdorf, the international welfare organization that started the SOS in 1949 to take care of Austrian children orphaned by the Second World War.

Thereafter, generous benefactors and selfless volunteers heeded the need, and the first village opened in 1967 in Banay-Banay, Lipa City.

Now, there are also villages in Davao, Manila, Iloilo, Calbayog, Tacloban and Cebu.

SOS also has youth facilities for "personal development and final independence... and skills training."

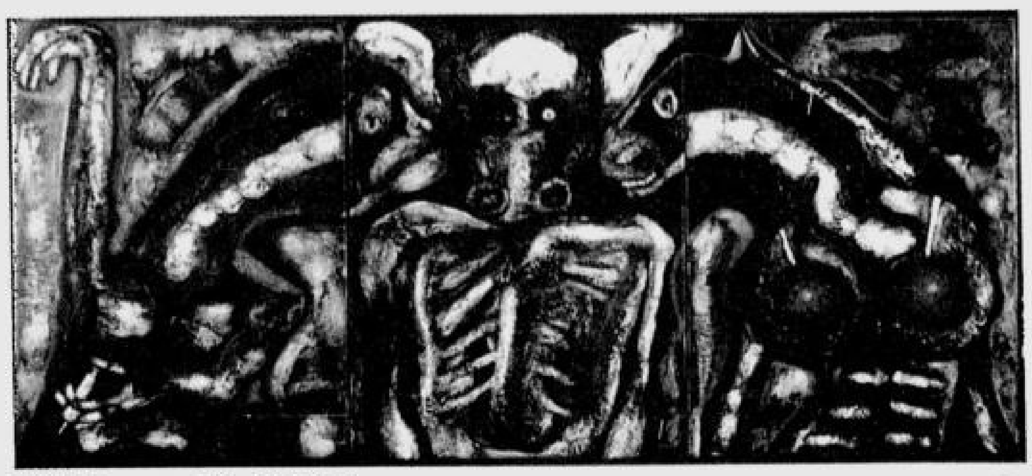
SOS kindergarten is open to children outside, particularly from poor families.

SOS has a training center for new mothers and older children, and neighboring communities also benefit from the Hermann Gmeiner Social Center for Mother and Child Food Program, Day Care and Counseling Center.

AAP artists painting the umbrellas are exploring the theme "Iba Talaga Magmahal ang Pinoy." Judging by the myriad styles unfolding daily at Kanlungan ng Sining, some artists choose to explore other themes, other motifs.

Artistic freedom is welcome as the works are an act of sharing as much as art-making—of sharing with abandoned children and other poor young people.

For P20,000, a donor or corporate sponsor will get an umbrella artwork. Call 6385900 or 6366616. Log on to www.sosphil.org.


"SEX, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll"

Painterly illustrator

From page C4

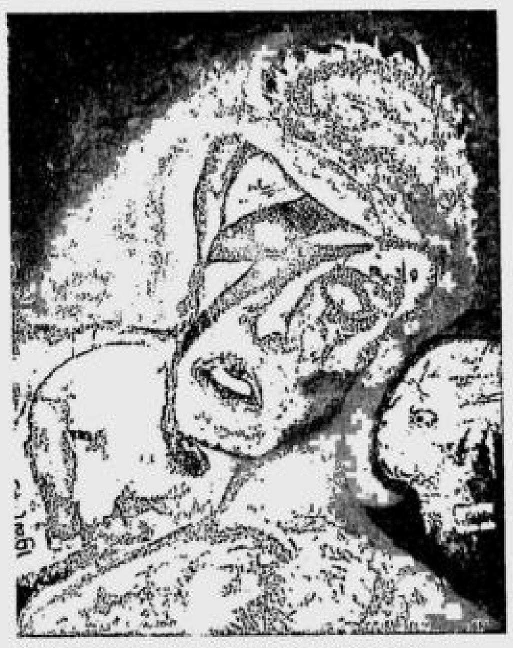
The Crucible Gallery at the Artwalk, Bldg. A, L/4, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

Major influences

And the guy's not just some painter—his work is a rich brew. These expressionist pieces can evoke the agony and menace of the figures of Ang Kiukok and Francis Bacon, even their rich color tones. Of D' Bayan's generation, we espy on his canvas the anarchic visions and warm tones of Andres Barrioquinto and Mark Matabilas.

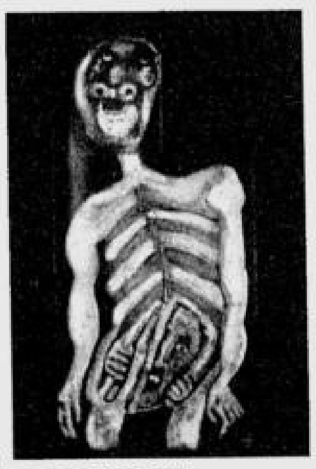
In fact, he acknowledges Bacon as one of the major influences on his art, along with "Jean-Michel Basquiat, H.R. Giger, gonzo illustrator Ralph Steadman, and Storm Thorgerson of Hipgnosis."

But most of all, it's rock 'n' roll. D' Bayan reveals these paintings were "inspired by rock bands from Pink Floyd to Radiohead, icons Bob Dylan, John Lennon and David Bowie, songs, as well as album covers by Hipgnosis and Roger Dean." We recognize aspects of some of those rock personae boldly outlined and broadly painted on his canvas.


"EXPLODING Head 4: Life on Mars?"

It is the sound of rock—progressive, alternative, punk, heavy metal, death-metal, or plainly rolling—that drives these contortions and stirs up this colorism in D' Bayan's paintings. The rock scene forms the imagery, and the rock idiom informs the commentary.

"There is something about the deranged and doomed enterprise called rock 'n' roll that is very appealing," says the artist. "You listen to a song like 'Comfortably Numb' or 'No Surprises' and everything makes sense—in a weird but wonderful way."


"BABOYMAN"

Common themes

His explication of each piece would sound esoteric to the uninitiated: "The painting 'Another Brick on the Wall' is an exploration of common Pink Floyd themes such as alienation, insanity and dread. 'For a Moment There I Lost Myself' is a meditation on Radiohead's philosophy of pain, menace and isolation. 'Baboyman,' inspired by a Radioactive Sago tune, is a take on greed and decadence. 'Nostalgia Is Selling Roses on the Avenues of the Dead' is a visual brew of men in bunny suits, a Batman wannabe, video-game symbols and cryptic figures depicting a panorama of stagnation, decay and despair."

High-mindedness aside, these pieces do have a power to grab and to hold.

Most of the titles and their corresponding imagery are anarchic: "Apocalypse Jukebox," "Salvador Dali's Head on Fire," "Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll," "Hunger Is My Favorite Horror," "Exploding Head: Sympathy for the Devil."

One sounds like an affront: "Baboyman." (We don't know whom the artist is attacking here—who the skeletal figure, and who the one imprisoned in the ribcage—but we can appreciate his take-no-prisoner attitude.)

"Things that are considered rotten or repellent can be sources of illumination," says D' Bayan. "Just like rock 'n' roll."

That observation, backed up by these works, confirms him as an emerging artist of acuity and impact.

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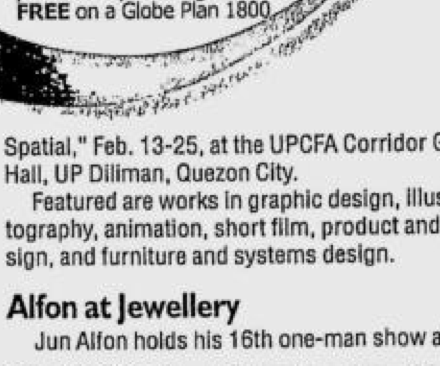
Halo-Halo

Spatial," Feb. 13-25, at the UPCFA Corridor Gallery, Bartlett Hall, UP Diliman, Quezon City.

Featured are works in graphic design, illustration, photography, animation, short film, product and package design, and furniture and systems design.

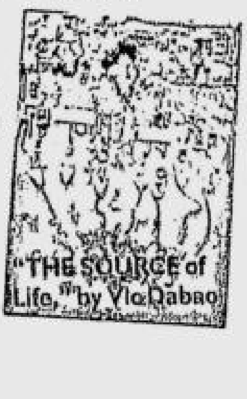
Alfon at Jewellery

Jun Alfon holds his 16th one-man show at the Jewellery, Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan, until Feb. 20. The exhibit features a collection of richly portrayed lyrical paintings of the tribal people in the South.



Antipolo artists show

Siyudad ng Antipolo Arts Guild (Sinag) Inc., will mount "Blossoms," on Feb. 18, 4 p.m., at the Progetti Enterprise Showroom, 7 Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City. The exhibit will feature paintings of floral series and other themes by Zaldy Arbozo, Leo Meneses, Mike Austria, Vic Dabao, Joseph Clavita, Joel Cristobal, Armida Francisco, Hendrix Pereyra, Ed Torda, Dondie Inlayo, Genie Carlos, Jezir Lascuna, Ma. Ria Garcia, Fritz Silorio, Darren Huertes, Vincent Dinoso, Marlon Dizo and Mond Gallanosa. The exhibit runs until March 5. Call 6367522, 6329819, 0917-8219604, 6961381/6036, 6786774, 0919-2600620 and 0918-5507939.


"THE SOURCE of Life," by Vic Dabao

Fourart at Ayala

The Fourart Group presents the third installment of its four-venue traveling exhibit at the Ayala Museum Space. "Modular Reconstruction" features new works by Raul Roco Jr., Norlie Meimban, Grandier Bella and Jes Evangelista. The exhibit opens on Feb. 16 and runs until March 2. Call 0920-9071303 or 3744878.

Florals at De las Islas

Galeria de las Islas in Intramuros will present "Flower Festival," an exhibit of paintings, prints and sculptures with floral theme, on Feb. 18. Featured are the works of Liza Arbis, Omar Noble, Angelo Baldemor, Antonio Doctor Garcia, Tony Pepito, Nik Masangcay Jr. and other noted artists. The exhibit runs until March 11. Call 5272113.

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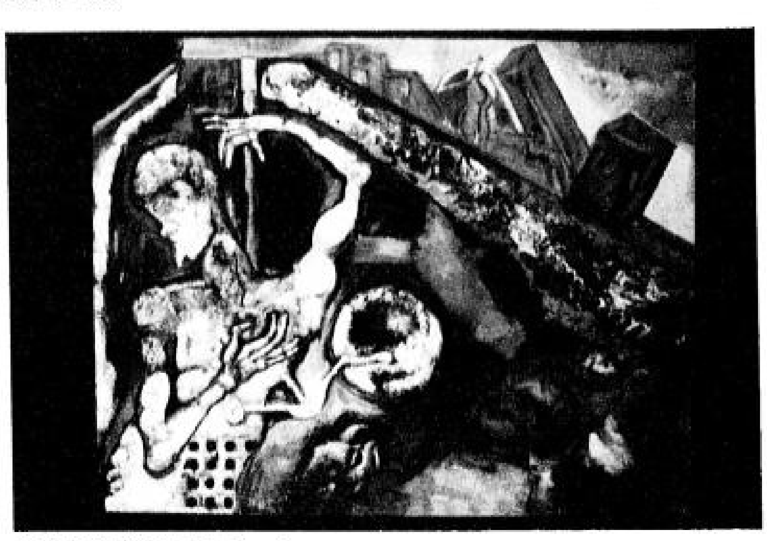

"APOCALYPSE Jukebox"

Painterly illustrator

By Constantino C. Tejero

ONE GLANCE at the works of graphic artists like magazine illustrator Benjie Lontoc, editorial cartoonist Jess Abrera and commercial photographer José Ibay and one perceives something barely hidden beneath the surface.

What is it? One looks closer, long and long, and one realizes there are paintings there trying to get out. Sort of a pentimento, if you will.

Another such artist is Igan D' Bayan. When we first saw his heavily tinted illustrations in a broadsheet a few years ago, our first reaction was, Why, this guy is a painter!

How true we've been proven when D' Bayan opened with his first solo exhibit, "Apocalypse Jukebox," 28 pieces in mixed media on canvas, until Feb. 19 in

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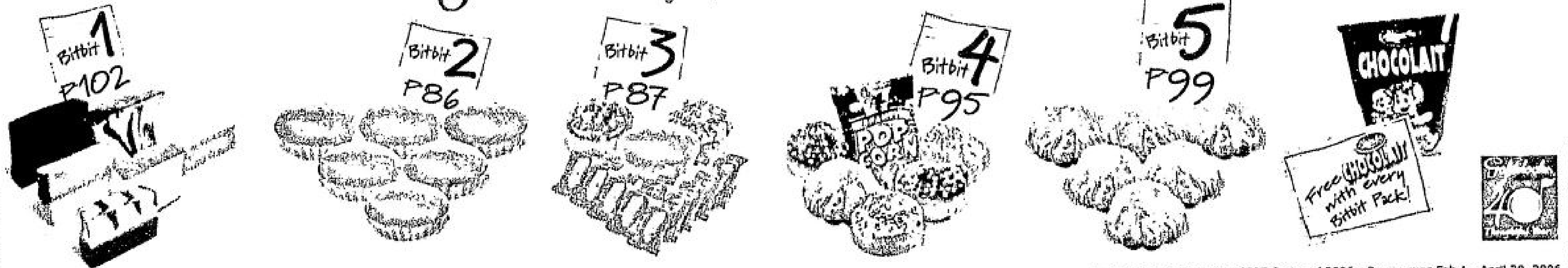

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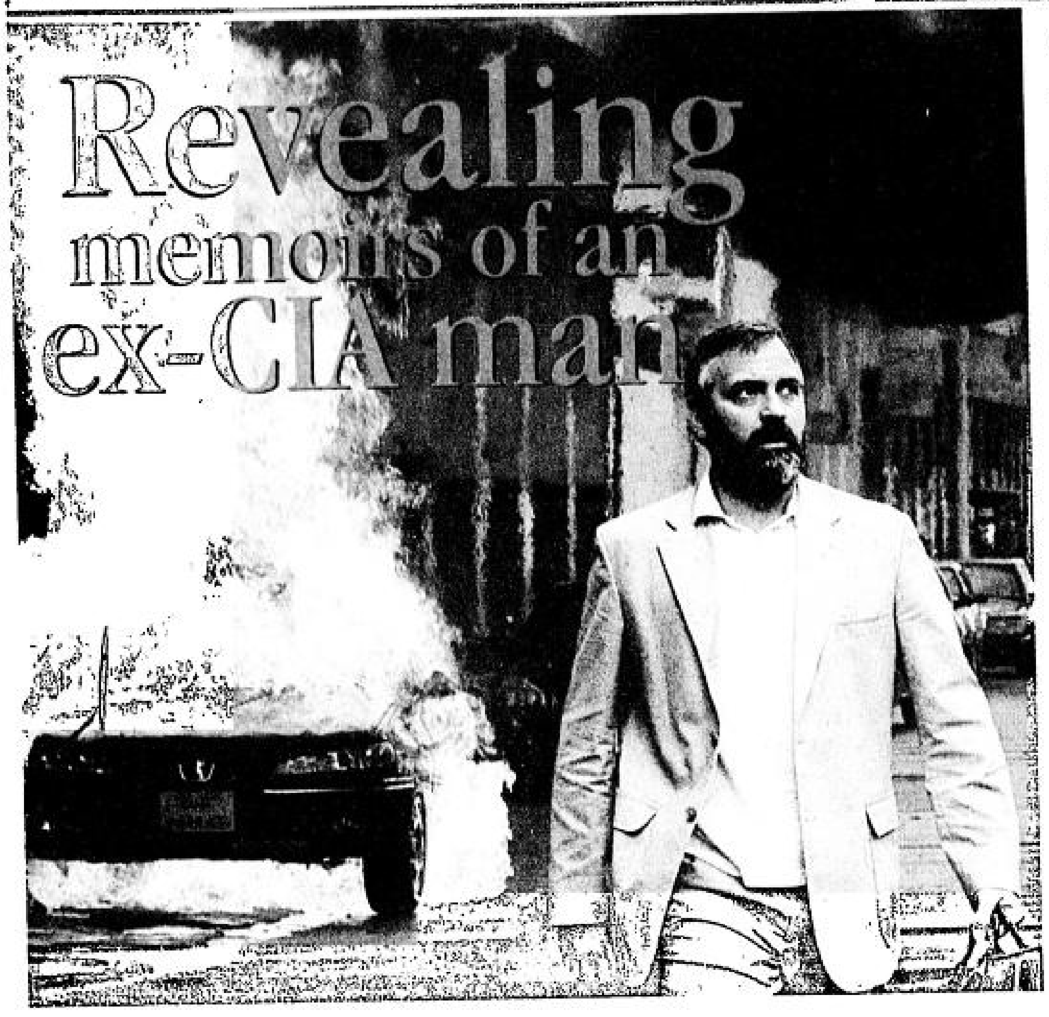
Revealing memoirs of an ex-CIA man



By Christian V. Esguerra

WELL-MEANING WHISTLE-blowers in this scandal-ridden country can take a cue from this former American spy.

Frustrated over politics at the Central Intelligence Agency, veteran case officer Robert Baer called it quits in 1997 and spilled the beans in a book.

The result was "See No Evil," a memoir swollen with candid revelations on how Washington politics had crept into the world's most elaborate spy agency and jeopardized its work against terrorism in the process.

Baer laments that America practically missed its chance to nail down the likes of Osama bin Laden, chief architect of 9/11, when the opportunity was still wide open.

The book went on to become a bestseller in 2002, somehow suggesting in quantifiable terms that not a few Americans were already growing sick of all the Bush talk. They wanted the truth.

Fortunately for Baer, his book drew interest from actor George Clooney, director Steven Soderbergh and Stephen Gaghan, who penned the Oscar-winning screenplay for "Traffic."

BAER

> Robert Baer, author of 'See No Evil,' talks to the INQUIRER about the cloak-and-dagger world of oil politics that has led to 9/11, Iraq, and the George Clooney starrer, 'Syriana'

In "See No Evil," the filmmakers found a wealth of material about an ever-present evil just as disturbing as the illegal drug trade spelled out in "Traffic"—the much-manipulated global oil industry.

"Here were guys building pipelines and roads in Afghanistan, dictating politics, yet no one's asking: Where's their money coming from?" he complains in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER.

Sophisticated movie

The book's upcoming film adaptation, "Syriana," gave the whistle-blowing Baer a megaphone, helping him draw the public closer to reality as only a tireless former CIA case officer probably could.

"I think it's pretty much successful in showing the real picture of politics and the oil industry," he says. "It's pretty sophisticated."

"Syriana," written and directed by Gaghan, weaves the stories and interests of a disillusioned CIA operative (Clooney), a reform-minded prince (Alexander Siddig), an ambitious Washington lawyer (Jeffrey Wright), his clever boss (Christopher Plummer), a driven energy analyst (Matt Damon), and big American oil-com-

REVEALING/ D2

How do I love thee? Let Pinoy writers count the ways

TOP FILIPINO WRITERS across the archipelago recite their favorite romantic passages from literature:

Ernesto Yee, Dumaguete-based poet, fictionist and lawyer:

"to be the air that inhabits you for a moment only. I would like to be that unnoticed & that necessary."

—*Canadian poet-novelist Margaret Atwood*

HOW/ D2

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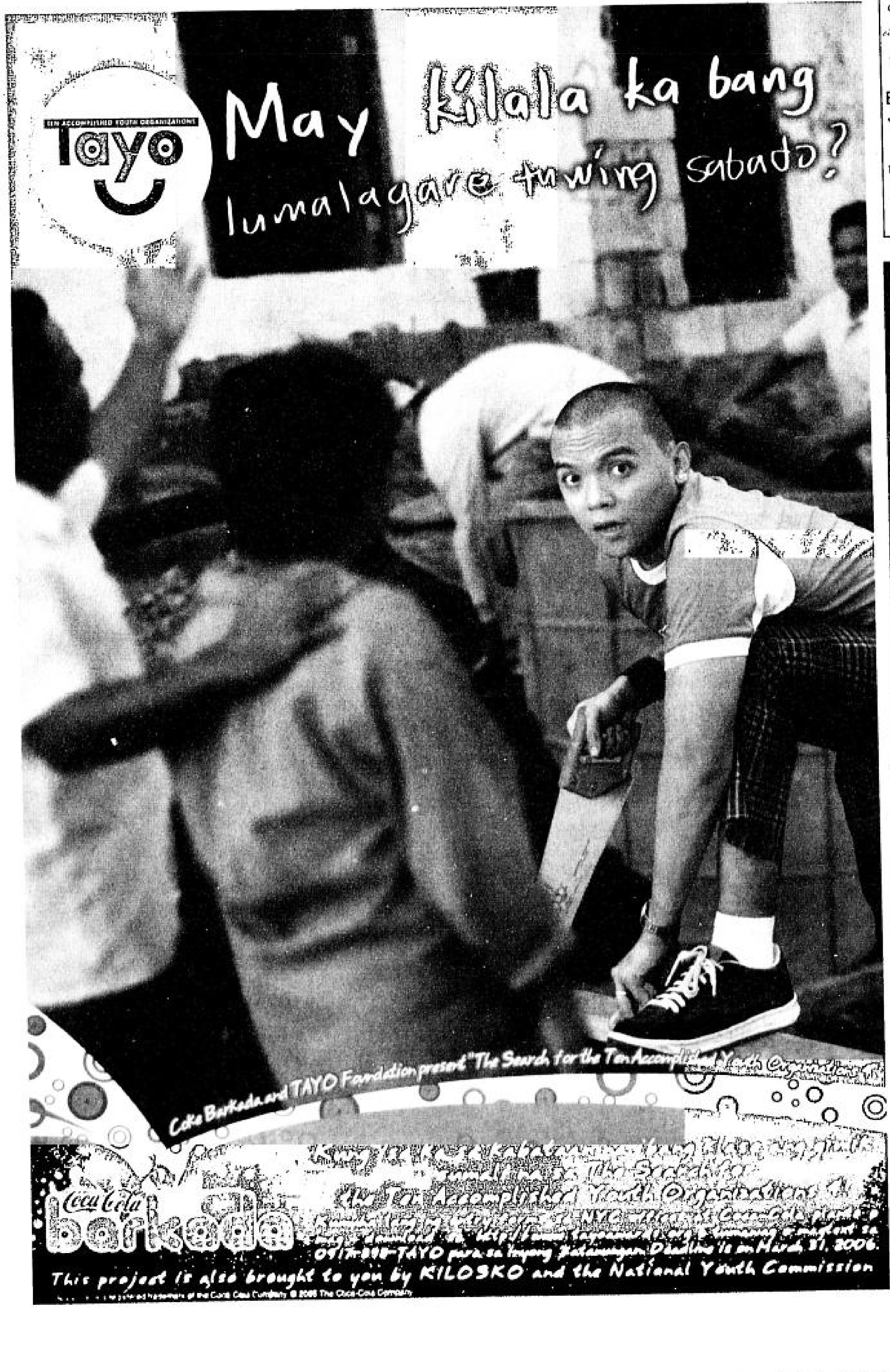

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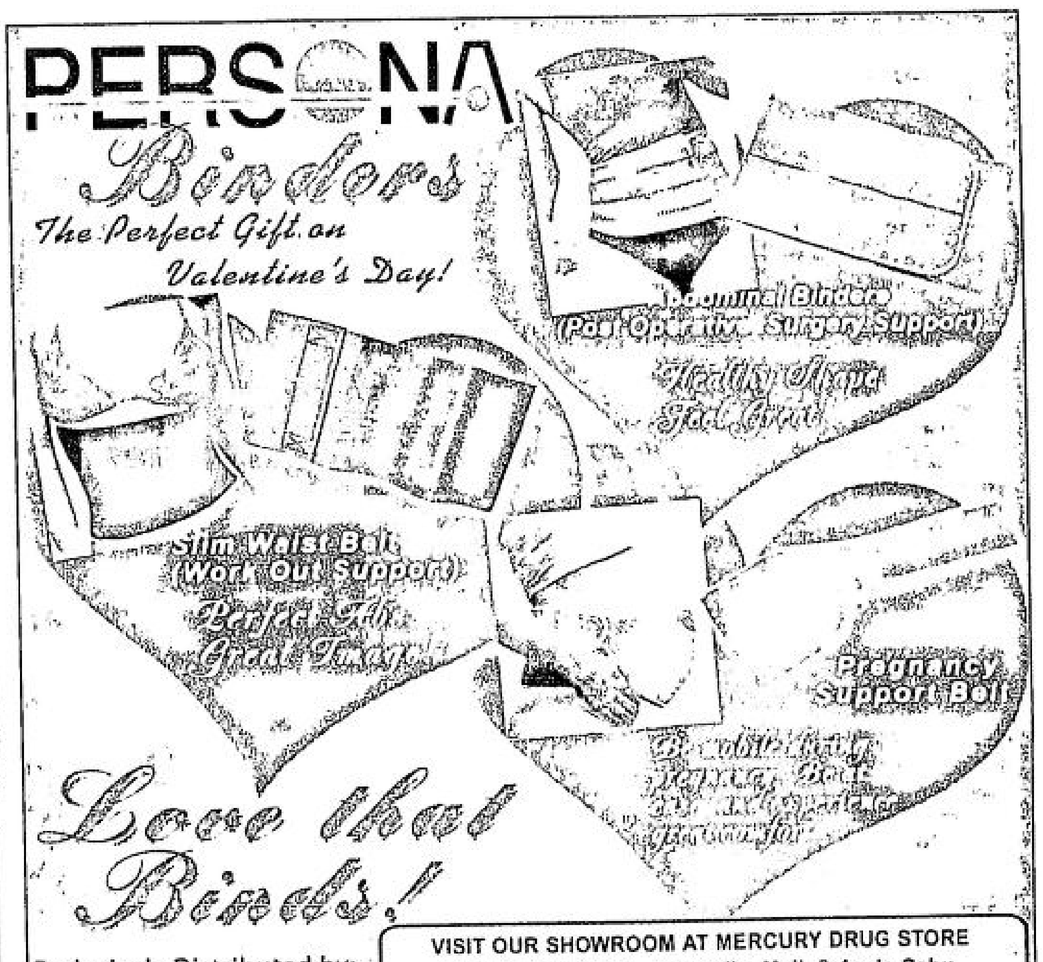

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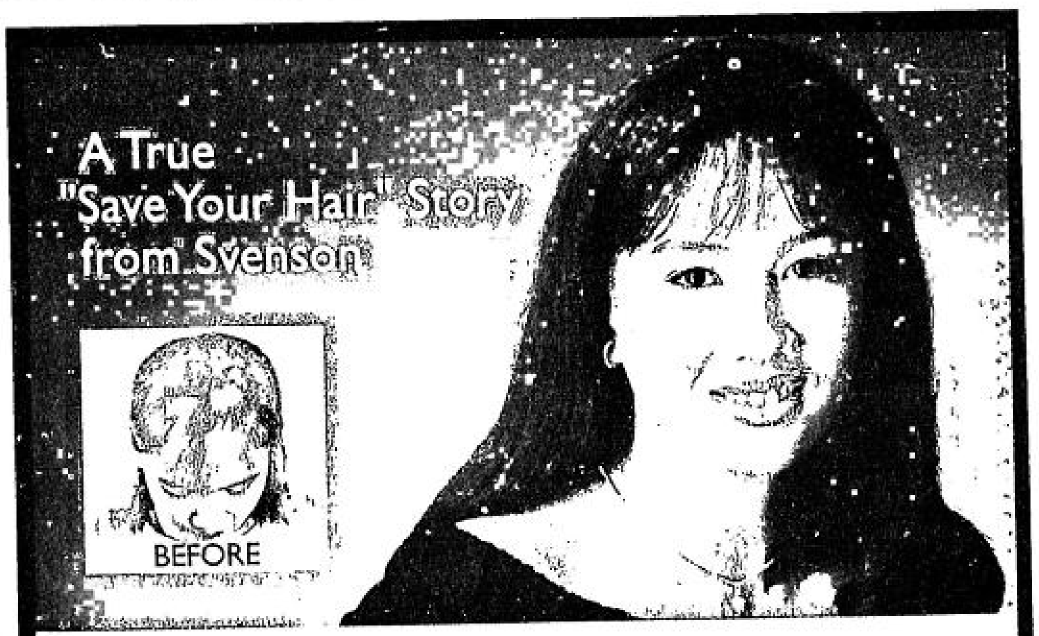

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- Jennifer Callanta

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How do I love thee? Let Pinoy writers count the ways

From page D1

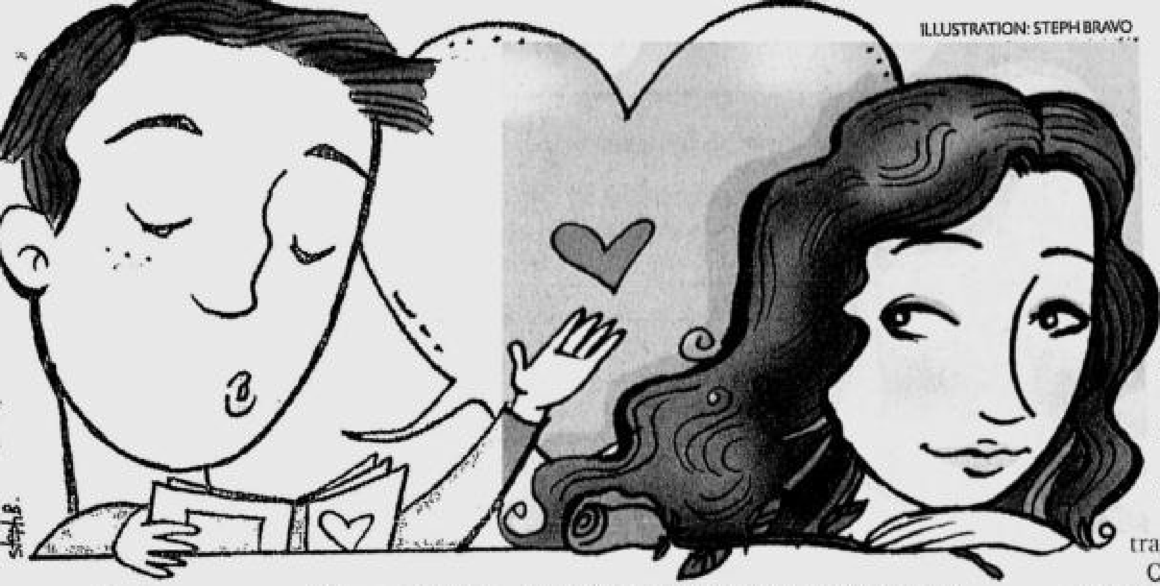
ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Rudy Alano, Bikol-based writer:

"[Maria]... was lovely. She was tall. Beside my brother Leon, she was tall and very still... [And] in the darkened hall the fragrance of her was like a morning when papayas are in bloom."

—"How My Brother Leon Brought Home A Wife," by Manuel Arguilla

Ricardo de Ungria, poet, anthologist, teacher and chancellor of University of the Philippines in Mindanao:

"the sun shines for you he said the day we were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head in the grey tweed suit and his straw hat the day I got him to propose to me yes first I gave him the bit of seedcake out of my mouth and it was leapyear like now yes 16 years ago my God after that long kiss I near lost my breath yes he said I was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him and I gave him all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes and I wouldn't answer first... yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes"

—"Ulysses," by James Joyce

Francis "Butch" Macansantos, Baguio-based poet-fictionist:

"And I have fallen under the surface of your love
Like a boat under the sea.
Like a boat I was old with desire,
And now my brows are oldened still with magic."

—"Song," by Dumaguete-based poet Cesar Ruiz Aquino

Marlinda Angbetic Tan, Cebu-based poet and newspaper editor:

"Yes, yours, my love, is the right human face.
I in my mind had waited for this long,
Seeing the false and searching for the true,
Then, found you as a traveler finds a place
Of welcome suddenly amid the wrong
Valleys and rocks and twisting roads...
Your open heart,
Simple with giving, gives the primal deed,
The first good world, the blossom, the blowing seed,
The hearth, the steadfast land, the wandering sea,
Not beautiful or rare in every part,
But like yourself, as they were meant to be."

—"The Confirmation," by Scottish poet Edwin Muir (1887-1959)

Merlie Alunan, Tacloban-based poet-teacher:

"When I first met you, you were like wine.
The taste of you burnt my mouth.
Now you are like morning bread.
I hardly taste you, but you sustain me."

—Author unknown

Servando Halili, Zamboanga-based critic and teacher:

"My love
Is like the grasses
Hidden in the deep mountain:
Though its abundance increases,
There is none that knows."

—Ono No Yoshiki, translated by Arthur Waley

The Filipino writers are members of the National Committee on the Literary Arts of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, which is celebrating February as the National Arts Month.

Romantic bards at Rainbow

IF YOUR BLIND DATE ON FEB. 14 WILL turn out to be a dud instead of a dude, Miss Right Now rather than Miss Right, do not despair! Let words weave their elfin magic through a literary reading of prize-winning writers, "Rainbow's Love Project 2: A Post-Valentine Celebration," on Feb. 17, 8-10:30 p.m., at The Rainbow Project: Manila's Colorful Cuisine, at the Nakpil-Orosa Courtyard, Malate, Manila.

The event will feature the lyrical evocations and romantic musings of Alma Anonas, Eros Atalia, Sharline Bareng, Karen Capco, Nonon Carandang, Keith Cortez, Ralph Semino Galan, Wanggo Gallaga, J. Pocholo B. Goitia, Mookie Katigbak, G.S. Lloren, Paolo Manalo, Hansel Mapayo, Ned Parfan, Allan Pastrana, Angelo Suarez and John Torralba. Open mike follows.

Enjoy Happy Hour: Project Threesome (three SMB products for P100); or Becky's Bucket (a bucket of SMB products for P300), to get a 50-percent discount on starters such as sizzling squid and chicken and pork *satay*.

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Poetry nights at bookstore

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POWERBOOKS SPECIALTY STORE HOLDS Poetry Nights this February.

Catch an all-woman roster of readers—Charms Tianzon of Matilda, Maegan Aguilar, Monique Jaramillo of Seven Shots of Wisdom, Anabel Bosch, Adelle Victoria, Rinka Kaz Castillo, Karen Kunawicz, Kooky Tuason, Kathy Chua Chiaco, Mich Dulce, Ginny Mata and Wawi Navarroza of the Late Isabel—in "Romancing Venus" on Feb. 17, 7 p.m. at PowerBooks Greenbelt.

Poetry Nights culminates with "Mars in Love"—which features readings by Lourd de Veyra of Radioactive Sago Project, Angelo Suarez, Cholo Goitia, Joseph Saguid, Tobbie Cadhit, Arkaye Kierulf, Mikael Co, Sonny Sendon, MaHaSa, Chuck Ronquilio of Winter Roots, Ogie Sugatan, Rafael Sandiego, Teo Antonio and Allan Pastrana—on Feb. 24, 7 p.m., at Greenbelt.

Good reads

In "The Cure for the Common Life," best-selling author Max Lucado offers practical tools for exploring and identifying your uniqueness and strengths.

"The Peace of Mind Prescription" by Dennis Charney and Charles Nemeroff helps those who are suffering from anxiety and depression.

A.C. Grayling's "The Heart of Things" is a collection of essays exploring the best about the human heart and mind.

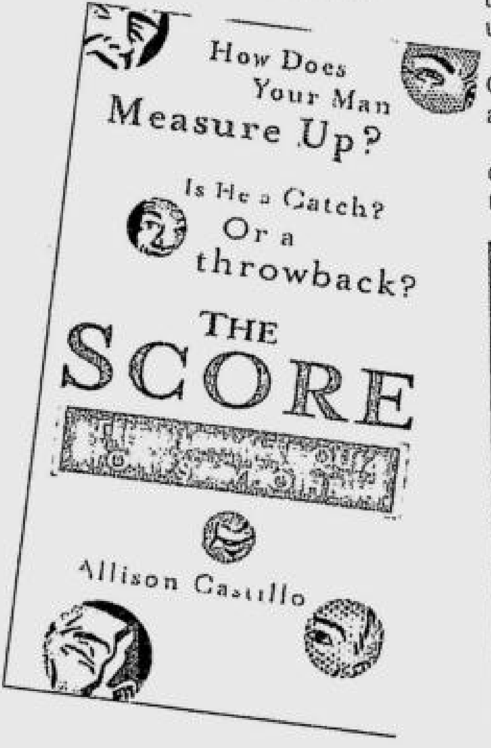
For every woman who wonders if she's found Mr. Right, Allison Castillo's "The Score" is a fabulously funny pop quiz for rating that man in her life—from first dates and birthdays to sex and marriage.

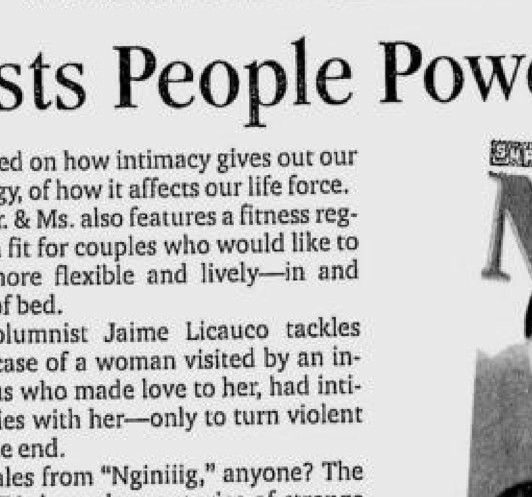
With 1,300 authentic French recipes, "Le Bonne Cuisine" by Madame Evelyn Saint-Ange is an indispensable culinary encyclopedia and entertaining historical document that is the definitive word on French cooking.

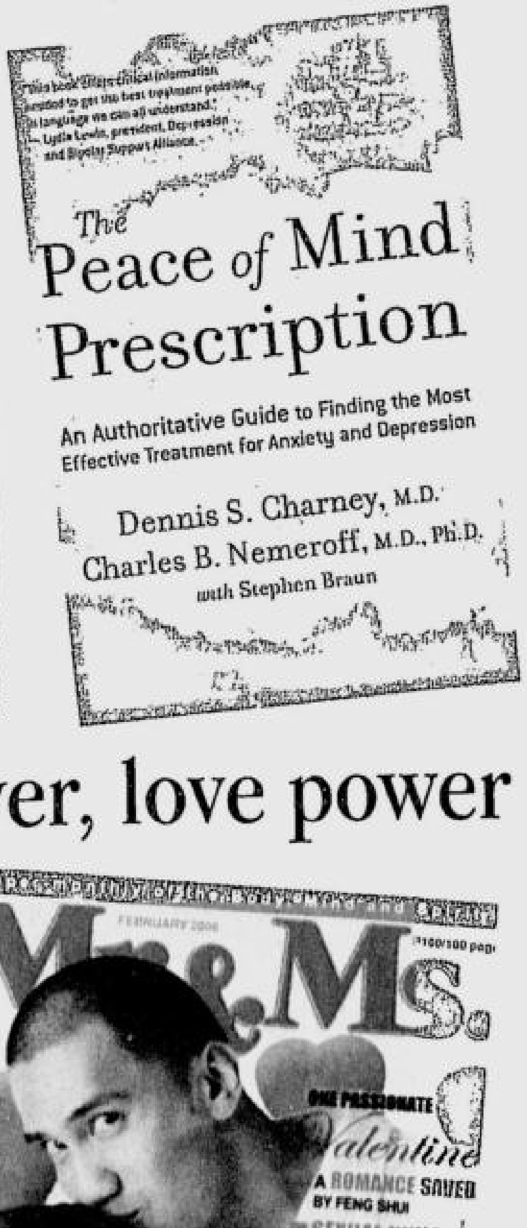
"Spas for your Home" by Cristina Paredes features 40 spaces in the house devoted to the owner's wellness, relaxation, healthcare and hygiene.

In "The Big Picture," Edward Jay Epstein gives an unprecedented, sweeping, and thoroughly entertaining account of the real magic behind movie-making: how the studios make their money.

PowerBooks Specialty Store is at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29); Megamall (6352898 to 99); Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63); Glorietta (7527075); Shangri-La (6380023/25) and Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334, 5243448).



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Mr. & Ms. toasts People Power, love power

A PUBLICATION INSTRUMENTAL in the People Power of February 1986, Mr. & Ms. takes time out to commemorate the 20th year of the event with celebrity Bianca Gonzalez on its Edsa 1986 gatefold cover.

As a Valentine treat, Mr. & Ms. features singer Kyla and cager Rich Alvarez, who reveal their attraction, their first meeting and their love story.

The issue provides tips on celebrating a good Valentine without having to spend a mint to please your honey. Plan and read tips on where to buy not-so-expensive flowers.

Learn from a couple who were predicted as being not suited, only to succeed in their marriage in "A Romance Saved by Feng Shui."

And if you think you know everything there is to know about sex, be informed on how intimacy gives out our energy, of how it affects our life force.

Mr. & Ms. also features a fitness regimen fit for couples who would like to be more flexible and lively—in and out of bed.

Columnist Jaime Licauco tackles the case of a woman visited by an incubus who made love to her, had intimacies with her—only to turn violent in the end.

Tales from "Nginiiig," anyone? The hit TV show shares stories of strange love, including one which tells of a wife who continues to see her husband, her dead husband, that is.

Those who are yet to find their love mates can get some tips from the feature "How to Find Your Soul Mate."

If you can't wait for love and would like to have a date as soon as possible, you may want to check Mr. & Ms.' trip to Quiapo to research on *gayuma* and love spells.

Mr. & Ms. magazine is available nationwide.

Mr.&Ms.
FEBRUARY 2006
ONE PASSIONATE Valentine
A ROMANCE SAVED BY FENG SHUI
SEXUAL KUNG FU ANYONE?
HOW TO MEET YOUR SOUL MATE
LOVE IN THE YEAR OF THE DOG
CLAUDINE BARRETTO ON FINDING THE RIGHT MAN
PACQUIAO RULES! STORY ON PAGE 5
RICH ALVAREZ & KYLA
Remembering EDSA 1

Revealing memoirs of an ex-CIA man

From page D1

pany owners (Chris Cooper and Robert Foxworth).

At the heart of the many-layered plot are the workers toiling the fields of a rich, oil-producing country in the Gulf, ignorant of the bigger political interests that actually control their fate.

Connex, a Texas-based energy giant, surprisingly loses natural gas-drilling rights to a higher Chinese bid, largely because of the straight-shooting Prince Nasir, heir apparent to the oil-rich kingdom. The Chinese element, of course, is more than a subtle reminder about the Reds' continuously growing influence on the world stage.

Connex soon ties up with a smaller company, Killen, which has just gotten drilling rights in the highly competitive industry in Kazakhstan.

The merger courts a Justice Department investigation but is actually being worked out by Sloan Whiting law firm. Through its ambitious lawyer Bennett Holiday, it seeks just enough materials to build a case against Killen with the Justice Department while ensuring that the merger still proceeds as planned.

Energy analyst Bryan Woodman lost a son while attending a gala sponsored by Prince Nasir. To compensate for the tragedy, he offers Woodman a business opportunity, a role that included giving the prince an expert advice on the oil industry.

Clooney is Bob Barnes, a CIA operative who's nearing retirement but is asked to perform a final mission before he gets a promotion and winds up a long career—assassinate Nasir.

The plan is to pave the way for the assumption of Nasir's younger and ambitious brother whom the Americans believe would be more pliant, if not willingly submissive to their interests. But Barnes' field agent turns against him and he's in a deep hole.

Wasim Ahmed Khan (Mazhar Munir) is a Pakistani immigrant, who, with his father and several other workers, lost their jobs because of the Chinese takeover in the Gulf. He finds himself in the company of a blue-eyed Egyptian in possession of a stolen missile.

You can only imagine what an angry and jobless young man and a cunning Islamic extremist could pull off together.

Triumph

"Syriana" is a triumph of sorts for Baer, who quit the CIA a frustrated man in 1997.

The title itself, defined by Gaghan as the "hypothetical reshaping of the Middle East by Washington think-tanks," is a slashing mockery of America's relentless fiddling with the affairs of the oil-rich region.

As Baer found out in his 21 years at the CIA, everything operates under this reality. Circumstances don't care whoever gets lost or killed or framed up so long as Washington's interests are protected.

"Syriana's" characters are inspired by real people he had met in the course of his spy work. Baer says he, in fact, gave Gaghan a tour of the places he'd been in the Middle East and Europe to allow him to "get the voices" of, say, actual oil dealers.

WRITER-DIRECTOR Stephen Gaghan

MATT Damon in a scene from "Syriana"

Much of Baer's commentaries are communicated through Clooney's character Bob Barnes.

Barnes as Baer

Barnes is a paradox in being slick, inquisitive, sweet-talking, intelligent and lethal while remaining largely ignorant of what goes on in Washington where the bureaucracy controls his field job.

It's Baer in real life, the CIA veteran rewarded with an FBI investigation for allegedly attempting to assassinate Saddam Hussein. In the film, Barnes was probed for "actually" trying to kill Nasir, but upon clear orders from the top.

"I couldn't believe that these things were happening and I was already 45 then! I was supposed to know these things but I didn't," Baer recalls, explaining that his long years on the field had virtually isolated him from conniving policy-makers in the capital.

The unpleasant surprise is captured by the often naïve, frustrated look in Clooney, who grew a beard and put on an extra 30 lbs in 30 days for the film.

"George was great," he says. "He's a listener. He wanted to know how it's like to be in the CIA, what we do when we wake up in the morning, how we deal with our wife and children. He wanted to absorb my personality."

The answer's not that difficult. Baer's got three children from a failed marriage and is now working to make his second one last. "It's almost impossible to keep a family because of the assignments and all."

Good thing CIA operatives aren't primarily judged on the success of their domestic life but on how well they've served their country.

Or so Baer had thought.

"See No Evil" is available at National Book Store. "Syriana" will open in theaters nationwide on Feb. 22.

How has a book changed your life?
IN CONNECTION with The Philippine Daily Inquirer's 20th anniversary, get a chance to win P3,000 PowerBooks gift certificates and be featured in the INQUIRER's pages by writing about the power of reading. For contest mechanics, log on to www.powerbooks.com.ph.

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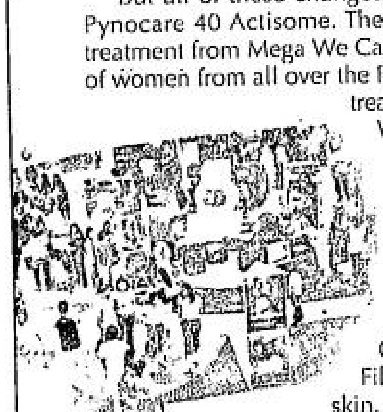
FILIPINAS NATIONWIDE ARE DISCOVERING PEKAS-FREE SKIN IN 8 WEEKS with Pynocare 40 Actisome

There was a time when Filipinas used to suffer in silence from "pekas", a skin disorder clinically known as "melasma". They would look in the mirror everyday and desperately find ways to conceal the dark blemishes on their faces. In their search for a product that would work, they have tried astringents, topical creams and have even consulted dermatologists for an effective treatment. This search not only had them spending an enormous amount of money, time and effort, but also left them frustrated and hopeless with the lack of lasting results.

But all of these changed when they discovered Pynocare 40 Actisome. The revolutionary first oral treatment from Mega We Care has changed the lives of women from all over the Philippines by effectively treating melasma or "pekas". With just 2 capsules a day for at least 8 weeks, Pynocare users have witnessed the transformation right before their very eyes!

As part of Mega We Care's initiative to help Filipinas achieve pekas-free skin, the "Pekas-Free Filipina" mall activation tour was launched last year. Starting in Metro Manila, the road show went on to share the good news with women in Cebu and then on to Davao, Batangas and Pampanga, where inquiries were gathered from ladies who wanted more information about the product.



Catch the Pekas-Free Filipina Mall Tour in major malls nationwide:

Robinson's Manila
Level 1- Fountain Area
February 11-16

SM City Cagayan de Oro
Ground Floor (Near Atrium)
February 24- March 2

As a result of Mega We Care's commitment to quality service, the successful road show will continue and will soon be visiting malls in other parts of the Philippines. Filipinas from other parts of the archipelago will soon be able to discover for themselves the wonders of pekas-free skin, thanks to Pynocare 40 Actisome's 85% efficacy rate.

Since its launch a year ago, the number of women who continue to use Pynocare keeps growing. And with the way that the Pekas-Free hotline has been receiving praises from callers, there seems to be no limit to the list of satisfied customers.

"Pekas" or Melasma Facts

- "Pekas", clinically known as Melasma, is an increased pigmentation in sun-exposed areas of the face due to overproduction of melanin in the skin.
- Melasma is a woman's curse: Female:Male Ratio 9:1 (according to International Journal of Dermatology, 2003). It usually develops among middle-aged women.
- Prolonged exposure of the skin to the UV radiation is the major risk factor. Other causative factors are:
  cosmetics (use of astringents and peeling agents)
  hormones (due to pregnancy, intake of oral contraceptives and anti-seizure drugs)
  genetic influence

However, sun exposure remains the strongest risk factor.

Pynocare 40 Actisome's efficiency in treating Melasma is supported by many clinical studies done in Thailand and Malaysia. It contains a unique Melasma Skin Clear Complexion or MSCC complex that effectively lightens the dark spots caused by prolonged sun exposure and helps prevent the recurrence with continued use.

Women like Flordeliza Pamplona, Benita Vinluan, Eva Ducat, and Vicky Batu have nothing but glowing praises that are almost matched by their equally glowing pekas-free faces.

"In just after a week of usage twice a day, I noticed some sensation of tightness and firmness in my face and the dark blotches started to lighten. Even the skin in my arms, neck and my entire body became softer, finer, and firmer, and the freckles on my back and upper arm decreased dramatically."
- **Flordeliza Pamplona**, a 48-year-old housewife, who has been struggling with melasma after a trip to the beach

"During the first month, I noticed my skin started to tighten and the dark spots began to fade. I even noticed changes in the texture of my hair!"
- **Benita Vinluan**, a 38-year-old housewife, who has had melasma for years

"It wasn't just on my face. I also started noticing that the color on my arms also started to even out. Friends and family have also started noticing the difference and have complimented me about it, which makes me really happy."
- **Eva Ducat**, a 38-year-old self-employed mother of five, who started seeing results from using Pynocare 40 Actisome in as early as one month.

"I have always had dry skin but when I had my skin analyzed recently, it has stabilized and is now considered normal."
- **Vicky Batu**, a 50-year-old widow and mother of two, after using Pynocare 40 Actisome

Flor, 48, Housewife

Benita, 38, Housewife

Eva, 38, Self-employed

Vicky, 50, Mother

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For more information on Pynocare 40 Actisome call HOTLINE: 894-1111 • TEXT LINE: 0917-8274330

LISA MACUJA-Elizalde as Kitri

KITRI, the innkeeper's daughter

'Don Quixote' opens new Ballet Manila season

BALLET MANILA PRESENTS "Don Quixote" as its initial offering in 2006.

A powerful ballet in three acts, it is filled with feisty Spanish-flavored dancing, dazzling turns and spectacular leaps and, of course, a happy ending. Turning the attention away from Cervantes' main character, the ballet is a light romantic comedy about Kitri, the innkeeper's daughter, and Basilio, the town's poor barber.

The demanding choreography of Alexander Gorsky and the fast tempo of Ludwig Minkus' score require extremely high technical ability from the dancers, and Ballet Manila delivers.

Performances will be at Star Theater, Star City, CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay, on Feb. 17-19 and 24-26. Call 4000292, 4043086 or 5251584.

MARIAN Faustino and Gerardo Francisco as Kitri and Basilio

SHAKESPEARE'S magical play runs at the open field of La Consolacion College Manila.

A midsummer night lovefest

By Lito Casaje
Contributor

WHEN SISTER IMEE Mora, OSA, president of La Consolacion College Manila, appointed me as the institution's director for performing arts last semester, little did I realize that her vision-mission of instilling theater consciousness in her academic community, particularly in her spoiled *colegialas* whose perception of culture and the arts stops with "Pinoy Big Brother" and "Encantadia," was something of a Herculean challenge.

My once self-aggrandizing spirit to fulfill only my self-centered artistic whims, as president and artistic director of the 16-year-old Dramatis Personae, suddenly made a turnaround after being challenged this time by the lackadaisical attitude of my student actors in my latest theatrical project, a physical theater version of William Shakespeare's romantic comedy "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

THE AUTHOR

SCENE from "Midsummer"

The students' lack of discipline, particularly in attendance and punctuality, prompted me to invite my ever-reliable theater friends from DP in order to instill in these greenhorns' psyche the value of commitment and dedication especially in the theater. The resulting mix eventually worked for the betterment of the production.

Our rehearsal sessions were most of the time frustrating and uninspiring. I was even tempted several times to throw in the towel. But I realized I had had worse scenarios in my over 20 years of theater experience, since I started with Repertory Philippines as an unknown actor clad only in towels in Terence McNally's gay bathhouse comedy "The Ritz."

Interactive, organic

Our vision of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," we'd like to think, is certainly no different from most of the interpretations that have been done in the past. Except that this time, we feel this concept should be more interactive, spontaneous and organic.

Apart from the picnic setup which will welcome dating couples and theater enthusiasts, a prelude of love songs, poems and dance renditions will entertain the picnic-goers as they savor red wine, French bread and cheese. Interactivity will be the order of the evening, as the actors will mingle with the crowd from the start and entertain them with light banter and smiles.

For those who are going without a date, we are giving out a half-broken heart as you purchase your ticket. Upon entering the picnic ground, everyone is free to look for that other half. The resulting matches will hopefully make the Shakespearean evening a truly memorable one.

After roughly two months of rehearsals, I have finally found allies in my pursuit of a sincere appreciation of Shakespeare—Francine Fernandez, Toni Rodriguez, Irene Montellana and Angel Rose Reyes.

They are my latest La Consolacion angels, slowly being honed toward the kind of discipline required of dedicated theater artists.

So come join us and enjoy your Valentine's week with a dash of a classic made easy. Whoever says Shakespeare can never be fun is a jerk and killjoy.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" opens tonight, at 6, and will have another evening performance tomorrow at the open field of La Consolacion College Manila on Mendiola, right beside Malacañang Palace gate. Have a picnic under the stars with your special someone.

Call 3130513 or 7360235 local 34.

Sunico, UST talents mounts Valentine's concert at Polo Club

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS celebrates God's unconditional love in a Valentine's concert, "Love Unspoken," tonight at 7:30, at Manila Polo Club, Forbes Park, Makati.

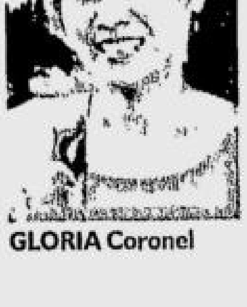
Talents from the UST Conservatory of Music led by dean Raul Sunico will perform a mixed repertoire of love songs, operatic arias, excerpts from Broadway musicals, and Filipino classics.

Aside from pianist Sunico, to perform are Fr. Manuel Maramba, OSB, Mary Anne Espina and Najib Ismail; singers Irma P.E. Potenciano (soprano), Gloria D. Coronel (soprano), Naomi Sison (soprano), Patrice Pacis (soprano), Randy Gilongo (tenor), Lemuel de la Cruz (tenor), Eugene de los Santos (tenor), Nenen Espina (soprano), Thea Perez (soprano) and Ronan Ferrer (tenor); guitarists Ruben Reyes and Manuel Cabrera; and instrumentalists Eric Barcelo (flute), Renato Lucas (cello), Ariel Sta. Ana (clarinet), Frenvee Andra (bassoon) and Reynato Ressureccion (oboe).

The concert will benefit the UST Center for Conservation of the Cultural Property and Environment in the Tropics and UST Conservatory of Music Faculty Club. Call 7314022.

RAUL Sunico

RENATO Lucas



GLORIA Coronel

IRMA Ponce-Enrile Potenciano

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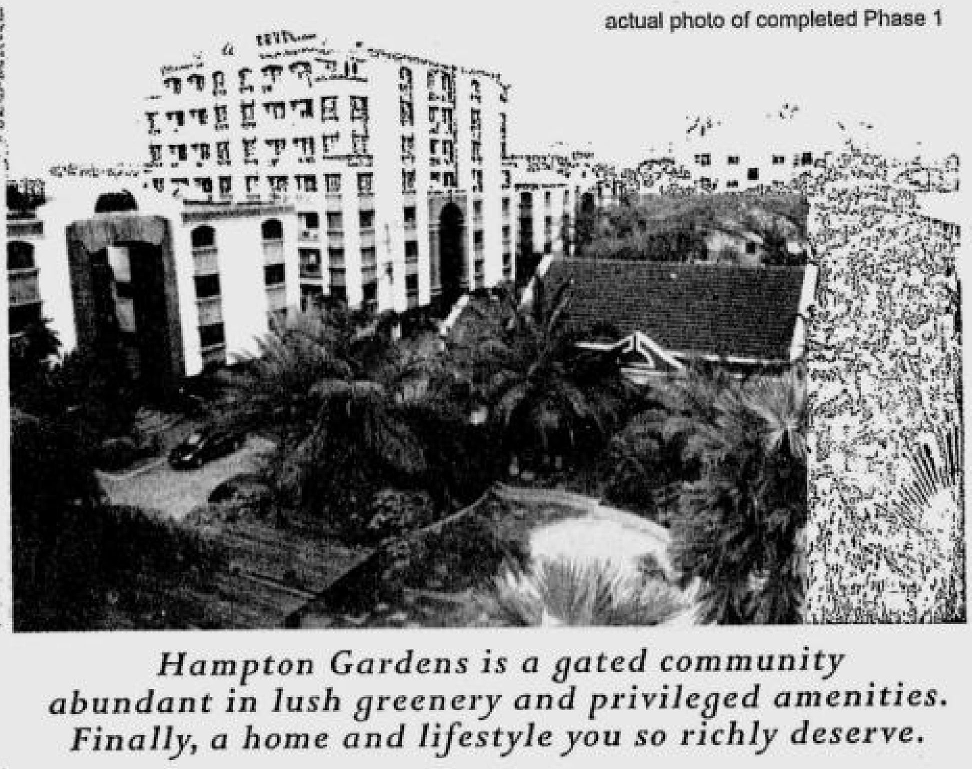

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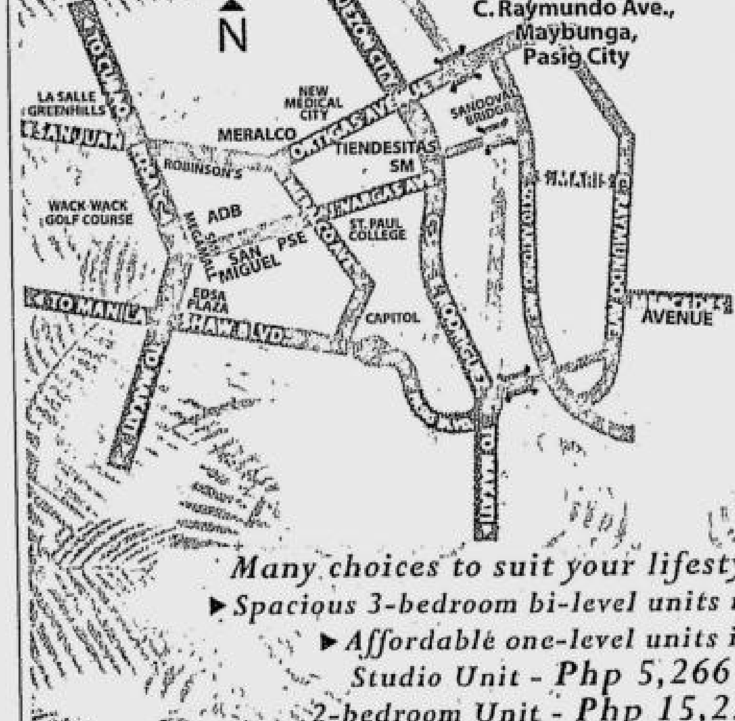

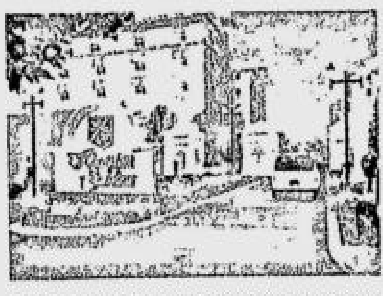

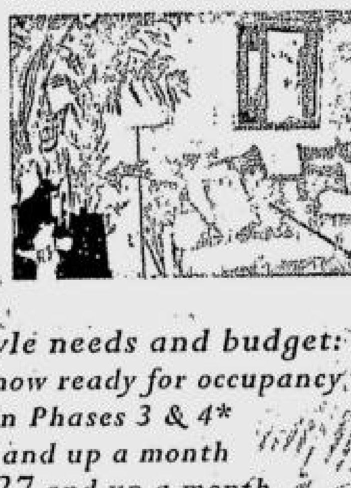

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